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# The Impact of the 2008 Recession on Youth Sport Programs in a Local Community

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The Impact of the 2008 Recession on Youth Sport Programs in a Local Community

By

Courtney Peddle

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
through the Faculty of Human Kinetics  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Human Kinetics at the  
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2011

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## ABSTRACT

Recently, Canada endured an economic recession where various industries and sectors were affected by the altering economic environment. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact the 2008 recession had on youth sport programs offered by the public and voluntary sectors with respect to participation rates and the manner by which the sport organizations dealt with potential consequences. Thirteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with managers or board members of community sport programs in London, Ontario (Canada). The results indicate that the recession had no impact on the overall participation rates for the sports that were examined. However, underlying processes caused shifts in participation patterns (e.g., higher attraction to lower cost programs). Individuals in higher socioeconomic brackets were less impacted. An increase was seen in the usage of existing subsidy programs. Organizations developed various business strategies, (e.g., freezing prices), to minimize the impact of the recession.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate my thesis to my parents, Russ and Jan, to my brother, Ian, and to my sister, Emily. Thank you for your love and support. I am truly grateful for everything you have given me!

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Taks, for her support and patience throughout this process. Her help and guidance ensured my success in the completion of the program. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Dixon and Dr. Reavley for their helpful feedback and continual support on this project. Also, I would like to thank faculty members from the Faculty of Human Kinetics who kept their doors open for me if I ever had any questions. I would also like to thank Dr. Paraschak for her support and guidance during my time here in Windsor. Furthermore, I would like extend my appreciation to Dr. Martyn for his assistance with my study. I would further like to thank the office staff, Diane, Pat, Cathy and Sylvia, who were always approachable and a great help throughout my years at the University of Windsor. To my fellow graduate students, thank you for the encouragement and keeping me sane during this program. I know that this study would not possible without my participants. I am eternally grateful for their contribution to this thesis.

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## PART I: RESEARCH PAPER

## 259.0 INTRODUCTION

In 2008 and 2009, Canada endured an economic recession where different organizations were highly affected by the changing environment (Usalcas, 2009). When a recession occurs the relationship between consumers and organizations begins to change. Individuals feel less secure in their jobs, resulting in an alteration of their consumption patterns for various products and services. Also, consumers begin to consume fewer luxury items and start spending more time shopping to ensure that they receive the best bargains (Zurawicki & Braidot, 2005; Ang, Leong & Kotler, 2000) or stop shopping altogether (Shama, 1981).

Due to this alteration in the relationship between organizations and consumers, management has to modify its business strategies to ensure survival. The strategies that organizations engage in during positive business cycles may be less efficient and effective during a recession (Ang et al., 2000). The implementation of different strategies within organizations will depend on the business's vision, values and mission statements. Some managers may focus more on the product, whereas others may change the organization's promotion strategy (Ang et al.).

There is a lack of understanding as to how a recession affects sport participation as a particular form of consumer behavior. The few studies that have examined the affects of a recession on sport participation came up with conflicting results. Some studies have revealed that sport participation increased during an economic downturn (Long, 1987; Roberts, 2009; Williams, 2009; Zurawicki & Braidot, 2005), while others stated that it decreased (Stuller, 2009; Lunn, 2010). The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact that the 2008 recession had on youth sport participation by

examining the effects on sport programs offered by the public and voluntary sectors in a medium sized city. London, Ontario was selected since it was highly affected by the 2008 recession. This thesis will explore the different elements of a recession and how it impacts sports programs. The literature review will discuss the definition of a recession, how it impacts individuals' consumption patterns and the various strategies that organizations implement to deal with an economic downturn. Furthermore, the method of this study will be provided along with the results and discussion.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Recession

A recession occurs when a country's economic standing has a negative value. Every country will endure a recession at some point since it is expected that the economy will eventually encounter a change in its business cycle. Business cycles do not follow predictable patterns since they are disturbed sonic waves that fluctuate due to a country's economy (Arnold, 2002; Knoop, 2004). A recession is a phase within the business cycle where the real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has a negative value for two consecutive quarters; a quarter is a three month period of time (Parkin & Bade, 2006). The real GDP is "the value of final goods and services produced in a given year when valued at constant prices" (Parkin & Bade, p. G-7) and is the broadest form of measurement to examine a country's economic standing. It is important for management within a company to understand how the business cycle works since it will allow for more strategic and tactical decisions to be made (Navarro, 2009).

At the beginning of the new millennium Canada's economy was very strong. However, by the early part of 2008, the economy began to weaken and the unemployment rate rose (Usalcas, 2009). Towards the end of 2008, the unemployment rate was 6.6% and the economic crisis began (Usalcas). The recession was called in the last quarter of 2008, October, and ended in July, 2009 (CBC News, 2009) when the economy began to strengthen and the unemployment rate fell (Statistics Canada, 2010a). Even though the economy had strengthened, the unemployment rate was still 1.6% higher than the previous year (Usalcas, 2010). The province of Ontario, the province to which this study pertains, experienced the greatest decline in jobs due to the weakening of the manufacturing industry (Statistics Canada, 2008a; Usalcas, 2009, 2010).

## 2.2 Impact of a recession on consumers

When a recession occurs, consumers examine products differently and change their consumption patterns. Individuals may change their preferences for the products and services that are being offered by various organizations, but consumers will not stop spending altogether (Shama, 1978; Sull, 2009a). Individuals value their money more when a recession occurs. Because of this, consumers may look for products<sup>1</sup> that are cheaper, more durable and/or of higher value (Sull). The reason why consumers may choose products that are more durable is because they might not have to purchase as many items over a given period of time (Ang et al., 2000). Therefore, consumers may no longer purchase products of poor value and may look for better alternatives (Sull).

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup> When 'product' is stated in this document it can be considered as a good or a service in order to encompass sport participation

Consumers may spend more time shopping and looking for bargains to ensure that the products and services that they purchase are of higher value so that they can receive more for their money (Shama, 1981). The reason why consumers may spend more time shopping, looking for bargains and buying fewer products is because they are experiencing increasing financial constraint (Shama). If the service is not worth the financial risk some consumers may eliminate the consumption of the products, especially if it is seen as a luxury item, which can include organized sport (Zurawicki & Braidot, 2005). In order to ensure that the product is not of high financial risk, individuals may examine the pros and cons of certain items in more depth to allow for cognitive decision making and to purchase a service of value to them (Ang et al., 2000). Since consumers adjust their consumption patterns during a recession (Ang et al., 2000), this study will investigate if and how sport participants (as consumers) adjusted or changed their sport participation behavior during the economic recession. One of the questions for this study is therefore formulated as follows: **What is the perception of sport providers with regard to changes in youth sport participation rates in their programs during the 2008 recession?**

Consumers who change their preferences for certain products are less likely to revert back to their original preferences after the recession (Sull, 2009a). Even after the economy strengthens, individual consumption patterns may remain altered and consumers may purchase products that are of greater value than the alternatives (Piercy, Cravens & Lane, 2010). But one of the reasons why a consumer will remain purchasing the same product during the recession is because of the loyalty he/she has towards the product. Loyalty is a deeply rooted commitment to re-purchase a service despite



changing circumstances that may cause the consumer to change their purchasing behavior, including an economic downturn (Kotler & Keller, 2006). The reason why consumers become loyal to a service is due to the high perceived customer value. Loyal consumers have a high understanding of the benefits of the product (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Loyal consumers will not consider other brands of products and/or services in their decision making process and are less price sensitive. Therefore, if financial constraints arise due to an economic downturn, loyal consumers are less likely to change their purchasing habits (Grewal, Levy, Persaud & Lichti, 2009). Thus, when a customer is loyal to a particular sports program they are presumably less likely to switch to a different program that is being offered by another organization.

Since consumers become more price sensitive when a recession occurs (Sull, 2009a), sport participants may substitute more expensive sports for less costly sports if they are not loyal to that sporting activity. For example, instead of skiing, the participant may decide to jog instead. Individuals may choose to substitute a sport for another that has the same physical exertion and requires the same amount of time (Gratton & Taylor, 2000). This study will investigate whether or not sport participants change their preferences and look for bargains when it comes to sporting services. This leads to the following research question: **Do sport providers have the perception that parents and/or youth participants are looking for ‘best bargains’ and/or ‘cheaper alternatives’ during a recession when it comes to participation in sport?**

The income level of individuals determines how they react when a recession occurs. Higher income consumers tend to be less sensitive to a recession and adjust their purchasing habits less than lower income consumers (Zurawicki & Braidot, 2005). This

leads to questioning if families from different socioeconomic backgrounds react differently when registering their children in sport programs during an economic downturn. The level of income eventually affects the amount of money that a person spends on sport (Lera-López & Rapún-Gárate, 2007; Taks, Renson & Vanreusel, 1994). Therefore, another research question is: **Do sport providers perceive differences in enrolment of children from different socioeconomic backgrounds during the recession?**

### 2.3 Impact of a recession on organizations

Many organizations operate in an environment of exceptional turbulence since the environment is always changing (Sull, 2009a). Organizations tend to adapt their strategies during a recession to ensure survival and to stimulate demand. Some organizations may adapt the product, price and promotion elements of their marketing mix (Shama, 1978), while others may relocate or close stores (Koksal & Ozgul, 2007). If management decides to lower its pricing there will be a short-term positive effect, but this strategy cannot be relied up on for long-term prosperity since it affects the organization's profitability (Koksal & Ozgul). Also, it is difficult to reverse these new lower prices after the recession ends since consumers may see them as more permanent (Ang et al., 2000). During stable economic times, management within organizations may use a marketing strategy to stimulate compulsive purchasing, however this strategy may become less effective when a recession occurs because consumers become more strategic while purchasing (Ang et al., 2000).

Promotional material has been shown to be effective in enticing consumers during a recession since consumers are looking for ways to spend less (Koksal & Ozgul, 2007). Individuals may, for example, be more likely to purchase products from organizations that provide promotions such as free gifts with the product (Ang et al., 2000). When an organization utilizes promotional materials in a positive manner there is a greater occurrence of profitability (Court, 2008).

Another way a manager can positively affect his/her decision making process is through consumer research. It becomes an important aspect for organizations' survival during an economic crisis because it helps businesses to redefine their target markets, their services and their promotional budget appropriately (Shama, 1978). By increasing consumer research, managers can advance their decision making process by having a better understanding of the environment and different demographics that may alter during a recession. Certain demographics that a company may have been targeting before the recession may have shifted its preferences, which would be revealed through research (Court, 2008).

When an economic crisis occurs, weaknesses within an organization's business model can be revealed. Although weaknesses may exist before the recession occurs, it can be expected that the recession emphasizes them, which can create a situation where the organization may go bankrupt. Organizations rarely fail due to an economic downturn, but a recession accelerates the pace of the failure (Sull, 2009a). A recession cannot only have negative affects, but it can also create opportunities where executives can create positive change within their organizations. For example, an organization can acquire market share from rivals and obtain cheaper resources (Sull, 2009a). Strong

organizations will be able to position themselves within the market to thrive after the recession and sustain the economic downturn with minimal damage (Sull, 2009a). Furthermore, companies with strong business models that can act quickly to identify and capture business opportunities are more likely to succeed during an economic crisis (Sull, 2009b). It is advised that businesses remain in markets where they have a strong position since the brands that are in midrange within the market shares are the ones that are most affected by an economic crisis (Ang et al., 2000). Organizations should focus their resources to strengthening their existing brands and position their products to appeal to more consumers. Refraining from introducing new products during a recession may also be helpful to organizations since consumers are less likely to be attracted to new items (Ang et al., 2000). This study will investigate whether or not sport organizations implemented any new strategies to deal with the impacts of the recession. This information is obtained through the following research question: **Did sport providers implement any strategies to deal with the potential impact of the recession?**

#### 2.4 Recession and Sport participation

There are three different sectors that provide sport participation services for consumers, namely: the commercial, the public and the voluntary sectors. These sectors are determined by their source of funding. The private sector is a collection of organizations that receives its funding from private contributions or capital investments for their operational procedures (Chelladurai, 2001). Consumers receive services at a cost and the organization has an ultimate objective of being profitable (Karlis, 2004). The public sector consists of government agencies at the federal, provincial, regional or local levels that provide services and programs to all citizens. The government is involved in

providing and promoting sport and physical activity for the general well being of society (Chelladurai; Downward, Dawson & Dejonghe, 2009; Searle & Brayley, 2000).

Government agencies receive their funding through tax monies that are generated at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels, but user fees or memberships are also collected by public sport providers. Since there are different agencies that provide sporting opportunities, the role of the government is, among others, to create partnerships with organizations in other sectors and change certain established relationships to enhance the sport system (Thibault & Harvey, 1997). The voluntary sector consists of associations that are run by volunteers and receive funding through relationships with organizations in the public and private sectors, as well as through membership contributions and user fees (Chelladurai; Downward et al.). This study will specifically focus on the public and the voluntary sectors since these sectors provide most of the youth sport programs in local communities. In addition, they are both non-profit and it can be assumed that these types of organizations behave differently during a recession than for profit organizations.

An economic crisis affects many different aspects of individuals' lives including sport. When a recession occurs consumers may change their consumption patterns due to fear of job loss and/or of income as previously stated (Shama, 1981). Some consumers eliminate consumption of certain products altogether because they are seen as unnecessary and more as luxury items, which may include sport (Zurawicki & Braidot, 2005). With that said, there has been some indication that Canadians are seeing the importance of sport participation due to the health benefits, and therefore see sport participation more as a necessity (Williams, 2009). Therefore, there is some indication that during a recession sport programs may not be as highly impacted when compared to

other goods and services. Thus, participation in sport programs may remain fairly stable, regardless of the economic climate. Therefore, the main research question for this study is as follows: **In which way and to what extent has the recent economic recession affected youth sport programs offered by public and voluntary sport organizations in a local community in Southwestern Ontario?**

Studies have examined sport programs during an economic downturn, but the results are conflicting. Studies that were conducted in the public and voluntary sectors revealed similar results indicating that the recession did not have a negative impact on the programs. Rutemillier (2008) determined that public pools within the United States were not affected by the recession since parents would keep their children involved in swimming. Swimming was therefore considered by Rutemillier to be ‘recession proof.’ Parents would sacrifice on other household necessities to keep their children involved in swimming due to the inherent benefits of the sport. Furthermore, Roberts (2009) found that the recession had a positive impact on sport participation. Roberts examined adult leagues and determined that there was an increase in participation. This was explained by the fact that all costs were covered by the membership fee, which allowed individuals to enjoy the various aspects of sport without a high level of financial cost. Zurawicki and Braidot (2005) surveyed middle class households to determine the effects of an economic crisis in Argentina on consumer behavior. They found that during an economic downturn, individuals shifted their sport participation to public places like soccer fields as opposed to buying gym memberships, to save financially. Another question in this study therefore becomes: **Do sport providers perceive the recession to have a positive or negative impact on participation in their youth sport programs?**

The various studies that examined the impact a recession can have on sport programs in the private sector demonstrated how sport activities with various costs to the consumer were impacted in different ways. Long (1987) conducted a study in Blaine County, Idaho that examined how the skiing industry was affected during the 1979-1983 recession. Long examined how different economic activities were affected by studying individuals' wages and the overall employment within this region during this economic crisis. The study revealed an increase in wages by 42.7% and employment by 3.5%. Long determined that these increases indicated an increase in demand for recreation during the economic downturn. Thus, the recession had a positive impact on the industry since the increase in the total demand for goods and services justified the increase in employment and wages.

Stuller (2009) examined the golf industry during the 2008 recession in the United States and found that it was negatively affected. The green fee and participation rates decreased from 12% to 8.5% of the population, which is financially significant since this reflects a difference of 3.5% creating a difference in profitability. Furthermore, 106 golf courses closed during this recession. Also, Lunn (2010) conducted a national survey in Ireland with individuals aged 16 and over and determined that sport participation decreased during the 2008 recession especially in more expensive sports such as gym memberships. In addition, young males were found to be more impacted and more likely to end their participation since they were the social group that was most affected by the recession.

Even though it has been demonstrated that the public and voluntary sector may have experienced an increase in participation during the recession, it may still be very

sport specific since different sports require the participants to encounter various expenditures to participate. Wicker, Breuer & Pawlowski (2010) discovered that the amount individuals are willing to pay to participate in sport depends upon the activity. Golf is an activity that requires a large amount of expenditures from its participants due to the high cost of equipment and fees (Wicker et al.). Taks et al. (1994) also determined that golf is an expensive sport not only due to its fees, but also due to its time consumption. Alternatively, soccer and swimming are examples of sporting activities that are relatively inexpensive (Taks et al.). Since the expenses required for sports participation may affect a person's ability to participate, and the costs for specific sports may differ, this study will examine the overall impact of the recession on providers of different sports. This leads to the question: **What is the overall perception of sport providers on the impact of the recession on sport participation in the local community?**

## 2.5 Government stimuli, recession and sport

There are various ways the government can affect a country's economy. Within Canada there are automatic fiscal policies that become activated through the government when the economic environment changes. These policies are used to stimulate the economy as well as stabilize it (Parkin & Bade, 2006). There are other ways the government can be effective when dealing with the economy, such as changing taxation, increasing public expenditures and contributing to the economy's stability (Hamernikova, Maaytova, Vostatek & Klazar, 2009). When it comes to sport programs, the government has two main tactics that can be implemented during a recession. The government can either stimulate demand for sport programs by increasing funding or it can cancel



programs or reduce the hours of operation of facilities to lower its financial expenditures (Maich, 2009).

There is a demand for sport participation in society; therefore, sport participation can be seen as a consumption good. The amount of the good that is created is dependent upon the demand and the supply (Taks et al., 1994). Sport participation has become more important to various social groups than what it was in the past. This has increased the demand on household expenditures and therefore, improved the economic significance of sport in society (Lera-López & Rapún-Gárate, 2007). Due to the increase in the demand for sport, it has an increasingly important role in a country's economic standing and GDP (Lera-López & Rapún-Gárate, 2005). Also, government spending on sport positively impacts the economy (Hamernikova et al., 2009). In addition, sport participation can be considered a 'merit good' since it increases the health benefits of participants (Gratton & Taylor, 2000). This study investigates whether strategies were taken by the municipal government to cut down or stimulate sport programming in a local community during the recession. Therefore, the following research question will be addressed: **Are sport providers aware of any intervention from the municipal government (e.g., increasing funding; reduction in hours and operation) that affected the offering of youth sport programs during the recession?**

In summary, it is expected that the public and voluntary sector youth sport programs will be positively affected by the recession. Sport programs that require less financing from parents may experience an increase in participation rates, whereas programs offering more expensive sports may experience a decrease in participation rates. Furthermore, youth from lower socioeconomic backgrounds have been shown to be

more affected by the recessions in the past (Zurawicki & Braidot, 2005). It is expected that sport providers will implement new tactics to maintain a certain participation rate and that the municipal government will enhance it's funding for sport programs during the recession.

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Setting

It was the original intention to conduct this study in the city of Windsor, Ontario, but during the summer of 2009, the public sector workers union went on strike. This strike had the potential of skewing the results since it would be difficult to determine if changes in sport participation were due to the strike or the recession. Therefore, it was decided to select another city that was also strongly impacted by the recession and within reach for the researcher; namely, the city of London, Ontario. As was the case for Windsor, London was highly affected by the 2008 recession due to the weakening of the manufacturing industry. Before the recession, the long term unemployment rate in London was 3% in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2008b). The unemployment rate was 10.8% and only 60.5% of the population 15 years of age and older were employed in May 2009 (Statistics Canada, 2009a; Statistics Canada, 2010b). By December 2010, the unemployment rate in London fell to 7.6% (Service Canada, 2011). London has a population size of 352,395 individuals (Statistics Canada, 2010c) and is located half way between Toronto, Ontario and Detroit, Michigan (About London, Ontario, 2004).

### 3.2 Semi-structured interviews

In order to examine how programs of local sport providers were affected by the recession, a qualitative approach was taken. By interviewing key people involved in offering youth sport programs through community sport organizations, an understanding of the perception of sport providers on how their programs were affected by the 2008 recession can be gained. Through this process, the language and behaviours used by the participants can be examined and analyzed to allow for a full understanding of the phenomena and for a complete understanding of the environment (Berg, 1998). Semi-structured interviews were conducted to seek the same understanding throughout the various interviews while inquiring for information that goes beyond the predetermined questions (Berg). The interview questions were guided by the above literature review and examined the perceptions of sport providers on the impacts of the recession on their sport programs, as well as potential tactics that were implemented. A copy of the interview guide is provided in Appendix A. In addition, throughout the interview process, the researcher pursued the collection some quantitative data from the interviews, such as membership number and/or registration fees or other financial information, to enhance the understanding of how the recession affects sport programs.

An informal ‘mock trial’ was conducted prior to the data collection to examine the ways the various topics are introduced to the participants and to test the clarity of the questions (Long, 2007). An individual from within the University of Windsor’s Division of Athletics and Recreational Services was asked to voluntarily participate in the informal ‘mock trail.’ This individual was approached since he/she had some indication of the impact of the recession on sport programming at the university level. The data collected

during this ‘mock trial’ were not used for further analysis, but were used to test the interview guide. No changes to the interview guide were deemed necessary after this trial.

### 3.3 Participants

The sample for this study consisted of 13 individuals from the public and voluntary sport sector in the city of London. Individuals employed in London’s Community Services Department (i.e., from the public sector), as well as key people involved in offering youth sport programs through community sport organizations (i.e., the voluntary sector) were approached to participate in this study. The Community Services Department’s organizational chart, which consists of the managers in the Department, was used to determine the initial four individuals that were approached to participate in the study. The organizational chart was found on the City of London’s website (City of London, 2008) and is displayed in Appendix B.

The major criterion for the first four participants to be selected was their involvement in the coordination of youth programs. In addition, they had to be employed with the City during the 2007 to 2010 period and have a clear understanding of how the recession impacted the department and the programs that were being offered. All participants were chosen due to their expertise on the subject matter (Long, 2007). Furthermore, individuals involved in implementing the sport programs were interviewed. Even though 13 interviews were conducted, only 12 were analyzed as one respondent was not working in London during the time of the recession. As a consequence this information was not used in the analysis since he/she did not meet the criteria.

The sport programs, whether offered through the public or voluntary sector, included golf, hockey, figure skating, aquatics, soccer, basketball and baseball. These sports were selected because of their participation rates. Of the sports commonly available to children in 2005, soccer was the most popular, followed by ice hockey, swimming and baseball (Statistics Canada, 2008c). The above diversity of sport programs allow to determine if certain sports were more affected by the recession than others and provide an indication of changes in sport preference by consumers. These sports also range in the financial cost to consumers. As stated earlier, golf is seen as an expensive sport (Wicker et al., 2010), whereas swimming and soccer are cheaper sports (Taks et al., 1994). Therefore, these sport programs that range in cost to consumers allowed for a clear understanding of the impact of the recession. In addition, these sports include both team and individual sports. For this study, youth programs represented any activities that had participants under the age of 18.

After the initial individuals had been contacted, snowball sampling was used to determine the other participants for the study. The reason for the snowball sampling was to ensure that the appropriate individuals with knowledge on the subject matter were contacted (Esterberg, 2002). Each department has a telephone listing on the City's website that is accessible by the general public and was used to gain contact with the employees (City of London, 2010a). Table 1 provides an overview of the participants in this study, their organizational affiliations, their functions as well as their pseudonyms. The indication of the costs of their programs is also provided.

Table 1: Description of the sample

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Organization/Department</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>Pseudonyms</b>	<b>Prices of activities that are provided</b>
Public sector	Aquatic services	Manager of Aquatics	Cathy	\$51.75 for 20 visit pass; 3 month pass is \$103.32 for children 17 and under <sup>1</sup>
	Golf courses	Manager of Golf Operations	Bill	Regular membership \$150 for 7 days for youth 9-18 <sup>2</sup>
	Community Services	Manager III, Area Recreation Services (East area of London)	George	Range from free children's recreation programs to week long day camps that can be around \$106 per week <sup>3</sup>
	Community Services	Manager III, Area Recreation Services (West area of London)	Mike	Same as directly above
	Community Services	Supervisor of Allocations & Sports Services	James	Not applicable
Voluntary sector	Boys and Girls Club	Program Manager	Jessica	Depending on the socioeconomic status of the participants, membership fees can range from \$25/child to \$200/child a year <sup>4</sup>
	Eager Beaver Baseball Club	President	Kevin	Around \$200 depending on level of participation <sup>5</sup>
	London Skating Club	Coach, Administrator, Coordinator of figure skating programs	Patti	\$270 for an eight week program <sup>6</sup>
	YMCA	Vice President	Mark	Child and youth year pass \$396.50 <sup>7</sup>
	Greater London Area Hockey Association	Treasurer	Ian	Not available
	London Rambler Basketball	President	Susan	Competitive teams range from \$425 to \$685 House league teams \$150 for 10 weeks Summer camps \$200/week <sup>8</sup>
	Soccer Associations	Worked with various soccer clubs as Treasurer and President	Eric	\$100 for a season <sup>9</sup>
	Elgin Middlesex Soccer Association	President	Phillip	Not applicable

Note: 1; (City of London, 2010b); 2; (City of London, 2010c); 3; (City of London, 2010d); 4; (Boys and Girls Club, 2010); 5-9; Personal communication

### 3.4 Data collection

The interviews were conducted between November 2010 and February 2011 at a time and place of convenience for the participants to ensure that they felt comfortable allowing for more truthful answers (Seidman, 2006). All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher for analysis. None of the respondents objected the audio recording of their interview.

### 3.5 Data analysis

After the transcription of the interviews was concluded, analysis began where the researcher imposed the process of coding. For this study, coding was used to create informative separate sections within the data. Coding is a way to explain and understand the phenomenon of this study. NVIVO 9 computer software was used to assist in organizing the codes that were determined, but some of the analysis was done manually by the researcher (Esterberg, 2002).

Open coding was the initial step in the analytical process where concepts were identified in the data. Events, actions and objects that were similar in nature were grouped together into “codes” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Once the codes emerged out of the data, various categories and/or subcategories were created by grouping certain codes together. Once these categories were identified, key properties were developed for each one; properties are the characteristics or attributes of a category, giving it precision (Strauss & Corbin). Upon completion of open coding, axial coding began, which is where “categories are related to their subcategories to form more precise and complete explanations about phenomena” (Strauss & Corbin, p. 124). Open coding is a way of

taking the now fractured data and reassembling in a way to make sense of the phenomena. Axial coding examines how the various categories cross link and the patterns that emerge from the data (Strauss & Corbin). After the coding process, a colleague examined the codes by using the same computer software program. The colleague was given the same coding structure that was used during the analysis. If there were any discrepancies between the two separate analyses, the matter was discussed further. Through this process, it was determined that the codes were reliable. See Appendix C for the coding scheme that was utilized during the analysis process.

## 4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Impact of the recession on sport programs

The literature indicates that consumers alter their consumption patterns when a recession occurs. Consumers may alter their preferences for items, but will not end consumption (Sull, 2009a; Shama, 1978). Within this investigation, overall the youth participation rate did not change, but there are some underlying changes that occurred during the recession. The majority of the individuals interviewed perceived that the recession had no impact on the number of participants in their youth sport programs. In fact, eight of the twelve interviewees saw no impact on their participation rates. However, a minority of interviewees indicated that two sport programs in particular were negatively affected by the recession; golf and figure skating.

Golf saw the largest decrease in revenue due to the financial constraint of the consumers. Before the recession, the golf industry was already in a steady state of decline (see Appendix D), but the interviewee felt that the recession amplified the decrease in



participation. The following quotation articulates the perceived negative impact of the recession on the golf programs offered by the City of London:

Well, in general, all of our rounds were down you know like as far as the number of rounds and the revenues certainly and it's continued on...golf has had a very difficult time. Golf has really leveled off since around the year 2000...and the revenues have [as well], but the recession hurt us and it's hurt the golf industry and of course junior participations and everything...[the recession has] had a negative effect, there's no question about it. (Bill, personal communication, February 4, 2011)

In 2002, the City of London had 343 youth golf memberships sold throughout the season; by 2008, this number had dropped to only 184 golf memberships purchased (see Appendix D for golf membership levels). However, in 2009 these participation rates increased to 256 youth members, indicating that the recession may not have as large of a negative impact on the participation rates as was perceived by Bill. Since the youth memberships increased in 2009 it appears that the recession had a positive impact on golf. The public sector courses can be less expensive than the private sector courses; therefore, the increase could be because of participants coming from the private sector to the public sector to participate in golf. Even Stuller (2009) found that public golf courses were having a higher level of participation compared to private sector courses since public courses are less expensive.

The recession did however have a negative impact on the revenue of the City of London's golf courses. In 2008, the golf courses of the City of London had a balanced budget, with no overall financial gain, but no losses either. However, this balanced budget was not maintained since in 2010 a significant deficit of \$259,000 had been incurred (see Appendix E). In 2008, the City started to add the costs and revenue of the Proshop, food and beverage services. This might have changed the total of the deficit

created by the golf courses, but the interviewee indicated that the deficit was created by the recession and not the change in the budgeting format. As discussed previously, golf is an expensive sport due to the high costs of equipment and membership fees (Wicker et al., 2010; Taks et al., 1994) with large amounts of discretionary spending. In the United States, the golf industry saw a decline in revenue due to both, a decrease in green fees and a decline in participants (Stuller, 2009). In London there was also a decline in revenue, but that decline can be attributed to consumers spending less on discretionary aspects of golf and not on a lower participation rate.

The recession also appeared to have had an impact on figure skating programs in the voluntary sector, but not in the public sector. Patti worked for the London Skating Club, a voluntary organization, and for the City of London by coaching some of its figure skating programs. The City of London's program has a subsidy plan that allows its participants to receive financial aid, which the London Skating Club cannot offer. The financial aid that the London Skating Club offers is payment plans, which only allows participants to extend their payments over a longer period of time. Parents of the youth participants may be more inclined to participate in the City's figure skating program since it is more cost efficient and parents can receive better financial aid:

...[The] city of London program...right now is totally filled and that's three thousand skaters in the course of the year...so...there's a very big difference in the prices. The City of London program...[is] an eight week program [that is] very, very cheap, whereas the London Skating program is definitely more expensive so we're really seeing that in fact...some of the kids come from the program at the Skating Club [and] go to the City program simply because of the money issue.... (Patti, personal communication, December 6, 2010)

From the perspective of the interviewees when the recession occurred, individuals started to examine sport programs more closely in terms of their costs. Patti found that various

participants from the London Skating Club were switching to the City of London's program due to the lower fees. This led to the City of London's programs remaining full and maintaining similar levels of participation, whereas the London Skating Club was forced to cancel some of its programs due to an inadequate number of participants.

Other high cost programs such as specialty summer camps were also affected by the recession. The interviewees indicated that some of the consumers altered their consumption from high end programs such as specialty camps to lower cost activities such as a variety of summer camps to continue participating in sport. The free summer programs saw an increase in participation during the recession, whereas programs with a fee saw a slight decline (see Appendix F for the participation rates of the free to low price programs). There are various parks throughout the City where youth can go to participate in a day or afternoon program free of charge. The City of London also has other low cost programs like summer day camps where the cost to participate for a day is between \$15 and \$30. The high cost programs that the City offers, for instance the specialty summer camps, can cost around \$200 per week. The high cost sport programs are still less expensive than other organizations; therefore, the City's programs might have been less affected than the marketplace at large. Two of the interviewees determined that some people were willing to participate in low priced programs due to the cheaper price. One of these individuals stated,

...we have quite a range of pricing of our programs...there seems to be a leaning to more [of] our less costly programs being taken advantage of versus [the] ones that might cost a little bit more. So, I think people are shopping around a little bit relative to the actual program cost because what we have is, even though the participation isn't significantly down, our revenues are down...and what we attribute that to is, in many cases, folks are taking the lower end cost programs (George, personal communication, December 9, 2010)

This trend reflects the literature, which has demonstrated that more expensive sports experienced a decrease in participation during recessions (Lunn, 2010). In London, the pricing of the various activities became more important for some consumers during the recession, reflecting trends previously found by Ang et al. (2000). Thus, there is some evidence for the proposition put forth that higher cost sports programs would lose participants to lower cost sports programs.

Similarly, different hockey associations saw an increase in participation because they were less expensive than others. James, supervisor in the Community Services Department who is responsible for the contracts for the various fields and facilities in the City, explained,

...we have a couple of hockey organizations that are fair bit cheaper than some of the other ones and I know their registrations increased in the last couple of years so that meant that there were families going to those organizations just strictly because they were cheaper.... (personal communication, November 17, 2010)

Other reasons for the change in participation for these hockey associations may also be attributed to the coaching staff, the availability of ice time, or incentives the organization may be offering to entice consumers. However, the findings would appear to lend support to the proposition that there was a change in consumption patterns of consumers towards lower cost options.

Studies have demonstrated that the loyalty of consumers towards products and services during a recession is important since consumers are less inclined to switch to other products or services (Frank, 1997). Hockey showed evidence of loyalty. For instance, there was no real change in participation rates in hockey, although it is an expensive sport. However, there were some shifts in the level that they participated in due

to costs. For instance, from travel leagues to house leagues since the costs of memberships and equipment in travel sports is much higher (see for example London Ramblers Basketball in table 1). Some parents of the participants may have leaned towards having their child play house league to save financially even if the child has the skill level to participate in a more competitive league. James, Supervisor in the Community Services Department, stated,

Yes that did happen...because as you probably know the competitive programs are a lot more expensive in terms of tournaments, travel, and out of town games [and] all those things. I know there were parents that decided to [register their children] just [to] play locally...[at a] lower level league just so they didn't experience those costs [so that] their kids could [still] participate. (personal communication, November 17, 2010)

If parents do not have the financial means to pay the costs of the sport programs, children might be forced to change activities or to no longer participate in programs whatsoever. Furthermore, participants may no longer participate in multiple sports and only concentrate on one sport due to financial cost. This further demonstrates that some youth sport participants were price sensitive during the recession.

Hockey, aquatics, soccer, basketball and baseball saw no meaningful changes in their participant numbers throughout the recession. A slight decrease in the participation rates was noted by some interviewees, however, the changes were not significant and could be attributed to regular attrition. Some children from a particular age range might be more enticed to play, for example, soccer in one year and basketball in the next year, depending on their interests. Furthermore, there may have also been a difference due to birth rates. Ian, Treasurer of the Greater London Area Hockey Association, explained,

...there might be the odd one saying "no, my son's going to play soccer now" [be]cause there's a lot of indoor soccer during the winter, but for every

[participant] that we lose we pick up one, so again...our registration has stayed very constant. (personal communication, December 9, 2010)

As indicated by the quote above, the programs' regular participants were replaced by new individuals. It was indicated in the literature that some individuals may substitute a sport for another activity (Gratton & Taylor, 2000). Organized sport may be seen as a luxury item by some consumers and could therefore be susceptible to declining consumer interests in recessions (Zurawicki & Braidot, 2005). However, in London there was little evidence of this declining consumer interest. This indicates that sport participation can be seen as a merit good due to the various acclaimed benefits and not so much as a luxury good. The benefits of sport participation obviously do not disappear during an economic downturn. That does not exclude the fact, however, that some forms of sport participation can be considered as 'luxury' (e.g., golf, sailing, skiing).

Swimming had previously demonstrated to be recession proof since swimming's participation level did not experience a negative impact in the United States during the recent recession (Rutemillier, 2008). During the interview process, Cathy, Manager of Aquatic Services, was asked whether or not she felt that swimming was recession proof. While discussing this topic Cathy explained,

I think [swimming] is more recession proof than some [other] activities and sports and I think...that stems from the life skill component starting and then moving it forward into a sport or an activity that kids will participate in at a higher level.... (personal communication, November 17, 2010)

However, there was evidence of a decline in participation rates in London's Swimming programs. In 2007, there were 16,360 swimming participants, but by 2008 only 15,434 individuals participated. Cathy explained the decrease by pointing to the poor weather.

London's pools are not heated, making swimming in poor weather less than ideal (see Appendix G for swimming participation rates).

It was expected that this study would show how public and voluntary organizations' sport programs benefitted from the recession through an increase in the number of participants. But through the analysis, it was determined that the majority of these programs did not see a positive or a negative effect; therefore, this proposition was not supported within this study.

#### 4.2 Alleviating financial constraint and consumer behavior during the recession

Consistent with what has been reported in the literature, consumers sought more cost-effective alternatives during the recession (Sull, 2009a). Beyond changing consumption patterns there were other ways that consumers could make participation more cost effective. Consumers were making more use of the City of London's subsidy plan to participate in sport. The municipality offers a subsidy program to assist families financially, which was implemented before the recession. Through the subsidy program, individuals are allowed to either have 25%, 50% or 100% of the sport program covered by the City depending on the household income of the family (Cathy, personal communication, November 17, 2010). The City's subsidy program in the last few years has been increasing in the required funding to sustain the consumer's demands since more individuals have been accessing these funds to participate in the sport programs. This is illustrated by the following quotation from Cathy, the Aquatics Manager: "...we have seen that. It's been a steady use of those dollars and the last couple of years it's been an increase [in usage] and we've had to actually budget in a little bit more to sustain that

pot” (personal communication, November 17, 2010). It appears that the subsidy plan is an important resource, allowing consumers continued participation in programs they may not have been financially able to otherwise. The youth participants and parents examined different alternatives to alleviate financial restraint, supporting the literature (Sull, 2009a).

There were other programs available to parents to alleviate the financial burden of sports participation during the recession. Kevin, President of the Eager Beaver Baseball Club, stated, “...there’s also Jumpstart through Canadian Tire that [has] been popular and people do apply through that” (personal communication, January 25, 2011). The Canadian Tire Jumpstart program is a financial assistance program available for consumers that are participating in the voluntary sector’s sport programs. This program is organized by the Canadian Tire Corporation and allows families to access additional funding that may be necessary for their children to participate in sport and recreation programs (Canadian Tire, 2011). Jumpstart will pay the membership fees, equipment and other additional costs for families that are in financial need according to the interviewees. Many sport participants relied on the Jumpstart program because some of the voluntary organizations do not have their own subsidy program. Five of the seven interviewees from the voluntary organizations found that individuals have increasingly utilized the Canadian Tire Jumpstart program to participate in the youth sport programs.

Also, the YMCA saw an increase in the usage of its financial aid program. The YMCA works with individuals that do not have the financial means to purchase memberships and determines the most appropriate financial plan for these consumers. Prior to the recession, the membership base for the YMCA was on a steady incline, but



the recession did not appear to amplify that incline on the contrary (see Appendix H for YMCA participation rate chart and graph). The YMCA membership base was already increasing prior to the recession and the recession did not strengthen the incline. In 2006, the YMCA in London had 15,760 members and when the recession occurred, its participation rate increased up to 18,596 members in 2009. However, the recession did impact the financial aid component of the organization. Mark stated, "...prior to the recession we had about 22 to 23% of our membership base [require] financial assistance; we [have] grow[n] through the recession to 36% of our membership base being financially assisted..." (personal communication, December 2, 2010). It appears that the increase can be attributed to the amplified financial constraint of the YMCA members. Reflecting trends seen in other studies where consumers examined the various tactics to save financially because they experienced an increase in financial constraint (Shama, 1981).

Higher income families typically react differently than lower income families when a recession occurs (Zurawicki & Braidot, 2005). The amount the consumers will spend on sport expenditures may be related to their income (Lera-López, & Rapún-Gárate, 2007). It was expected that youth from different socioeconomic backgrounds would be affected differently during the recession, but only seven of the twelve interviewees were able to discuss this matter. For five of the twelve interviewees, socioeconomic status was something they had not previously examined or was not relevant due to their location in London. For example, the Eager Beaver Baseball Club is run in a neighbourhood that has individuals of the same socioeconomic status, so it would have been difficult to determine the impact of the recession on different socioeconomic

groups. Out of the other seven interviewees only Ian found that the recession did not have an impact on the socioeconomic composition of the participants in his hockey association. The other interviewees perceived that there was a shift in the socioeconomic status of their participants during the recession.

The interviewees perceived that individuals that were in a higher income bracket before the recession were less affected than the lower to middle income participants. Lower to middle income families were more inclined to consider the various financial aid programs to save money due to the change in income or financial constraint. Parents from a higher income bracket were affected if they experienced a job loss or a decrease in working hours, which may have altered the participation of their children. This is emphasized by the following quote from Jessica, Program Manager of the Boys and Girls club,

...when it came to parents who were looking for affordable things to do we saw an increase of families that were more middle income...85% of our families are low income, but we saw an increase in the middle income...to higher income families coming in looking for affordable programs so a lot of these families had two working parents, but perhaps one lost a job or one had their hours cut back or their position had changed or something like that....(personal communication, January 5, 2011)

This trend was also seen in the golf courses that were in a wealthier part of London, which maintained higher participation levels than the others. Six interviewees confirmed that youth with higher socioeconomic backgrounds were less affected by the recession than their lower socioeconomic counterparts; therefore, although the proposition, individuals from different socioeconomic backgrounds would react different during the recession, was not universally confirmed, it received some support. The findings reflected to some extent that the costs of sport was a stronger barrier for some individuals than for

their counterparts, which supports previous findings in the literature (e.g., Downward et al., 2009).

#### 4.3 Sport organizations' strategies during the recession

The majority of organizations within this study did not alter their programming. The London Skating Club was the only organization that had to cancel programs due to a decrease in the number of participants. Even if there was a decrease in the number of participants, the municipality would still offer its programs since it is important for the public sector to provide programs for individuals within the community. Bill, the Manager of the City's golf courses, stated,

...we're a municipality, [so] we're going to offer those programs anyway. We're [going to] encourage junior golfers to play [because] we know that they are our future; it's a business decision. They're our future golfers. We need those [individuals]. (personal communication, February 4, 2011)

The only organization that increased the number of classes was the YMCA since there was an increase in the participation rate.

Although programming was not affected, past studies have indicated that organizations may later their marketing strategies during a recession (Shama, 1978). Within this study, it was expected that sport providers would implement new tactics to maintain a certain level of participation, which was supported by the findings. Sport organizations within London froze their prices or raised them minimally, to reflect their participants' new financial constraints and to stimulate demand and maintain participation rates during the recession. George, Manager in the Community Services Department, stated, "...[in] 2011 there's no rate increases proposed...so we've taken some conscious steps to ensure affordability and accessibility..." (personal

communication, December 9, 2010). Beyond lowering prices, the golf courses have introduced more options through different membership packages. They implemented this strategy before the recession and it had minimal success during the recession.

Some of the voluntary organizations did not have a subsidy program due to lack of resources. One of the tactics employed by of these organizations was to enhance their payment plans by lengthening the payment period to assist participants. Furthermore, the London Skating Club discontinued their use of an administration fee during the recession to help the participants save more financially. When discussing their payment plans Patti from the London Skating Club explained,

People signing up...want special payment plans and we're willing help them out just because people are cautious; they don't want to tie all their money up so if they can do little bits and pieces here and there that seems to keep them happy. [Payment plans] have definitely [had] an impact for sure. (personal communication, December 6, 2010)

By changing the structure of the payment plans, the London Skating Club was potentially able to sustain some of their participants since they might have been less inclined to leave the program.

During the recession, the sport organizations that were investigated tried to find new methods of communicating with consumers; reflecting the importance for organizations to use various methods of communication with consumers to promote their programs (Court, 2008). Since these organizations did not have large promotional budgets they increased the use of free local based papers to promote its programs. Furthermore, the municipality focused more on getting to know its clientele to create and promote programs that would be of importance to them. This allowed the municipality to promote programs that would be beneficial to certain demographic groups such as the

subsidy plan for families of lower socioeconomic status. Conducting consumer research allows sport organizations to market their programs to the appropriate individuals that are more likely to participate in their activities (Ang et al., 2000). The municipality also increased customer service training for its staff about the demographics around the community centres; enhancing their understanding to be able to provide more effectively, which will increase the overall performance of the organization during the recession reflecting the recommendations of Koksai and Ozgul (2007). The employees were thus able to promote the various aspects of the programs that would be beneficial for individuals such as the subsidy program.

During the recession, three of the voluntary organizations found it more difficult to find sponsorships and donations for their programs. The organizations use sponsorships to assist with expenses, but because of the lack of sponsorships, these organizations had to obtain funds in other ways. Eric from the soccer associations illustrated this as follows:

...the last couple of years it's been harder to get sponsorships...some of the corporate sponsorships are starting to come back now, but most [prior to the recession] were moms and pops and if they had a small business they would do sponsorships. That's still true, but not to the extent it use[d] to be....(personal communication, January 13, 2011)

The soccer association had to run 12 teams during the recession without sponsorships, leading to increased membership fees. The other organizations tried to resist increasing fees by doing more fundraising throughout the year, adjusting their budgets, and/or decreasing their expenditures in other areas to save money. These strategies were important because of the increased price sensitivity of consumers during recessions. The only voluntary association that saw an increase in sponsorships from individuals and/or

organizations was the London Rambler basketball association. Susan, President of the basketball club, was able to obtain more sponsorship income by increasing her efforts to find individuals and/or companies that were willing to sponsor. Also, she asked more alumni to sponsor some of the athletes to help them with the costs of the programs. As stated, these organizations did implement some tactics to deal with the effects of the recession; supporting the proposition that sport providers will implement new strategies to maintain the level of participation.

In summary, there were aspects that the literature has shown to be effective during a recession that was utilized by the sport organizations. The main marketing strategy implemented by the organizations was pricing, which has been shown to be effective during a recession for a short-term (Koksal & Ozgul, 2007). The golf courses did implement an application of promotion by creating new membership packages that would alleviate some financial constrain on the participants. Even though this strategy was not as effective as expected, other forms of promotional material can be used to entice consumers to participate in the sport program (Court, 2008). Furthermore, consumer research was utilized by the City, which helped the employees to further understand the changing environment (Court, 2008).

There were some aspects from the literature that were not demonstrated through the analysis. It was undetermined whether or not the interviewees found that the weaker characteristics of their sport organizations were emphasized during the recession (Sull, 2009a). Also, the literature discussed how organizations should strengthen existing brands during a recession, but this was not demonstrated in the analysis since the sport organizations didn't implement this strategy.

#### 4.4 Government impact on sport programs

As indicated in the literature, the government is involved in providing and promoting sport and physical activity for the general well being of society (Chelladurai, 2001; Searle & Brayley, 2000). During the recession, the federal and provincial governments did not increase their financial assistance for the sport organizations that were examined in London. The only increase in financial assistance was at the municipal level with the subsidy program. The federal and provincial government only assisted with infrastructure stimuli. Three of the 12 interviewees were able to obtain assistance with their infrastructure requirements and this allowed them to either upgrade or build new facilities to enhance the recreation opportunities available in the future. Voluntary organizations were able to apply for grants, but there was a freeze in the amount that was available during the recession. This is demonstrated by the following quote,

We certainly didn't see operational grants. We received a number of capital grants that allowed us to start reinvesting in our buildings. So we were able to take advantage of the recreation infrastructure programs, around the rink program, so we're doing full facility upgrades...at our centre branch London location, our St. Thomas location, and our Woodstock location where we have multimillion dollar renovation projects.... (Mark, personal communication, December 2, 2010)

Increases in federal and provincial funding were localized to infrastructure expenditures, but the government did not decrease any operational funding. This contrasts fears in other studies that during times of fiscal constraint certain sport services receive less funding and may be eliminated (Karlis, 2004).

The government can implement one of two tactics during the recession that affects sport programs. The government can increase stimulus for the sport programs by increasing the funding or they can reduce the number of programs available or reduce

operation hours to cut expenditures. The City of London chose the former by increasing stimulus through the subsidy program, confirming the proposition that the municipal government would enhance funding for sport programs. Based on previous research there are two general methods that a government body can operate its subsidy program; they either provide the funding directly to the participants or they can subsidize the organization to increase participation (Downward et al., 2009). During the most recent recession, the City of London subsidized the participants directly through the subsidy program for participants in financial need.

Governments did not decrease funding, but introduction of the HST on July 1, 2010 had a major impact on sport organizations. The HST was used to harmonize the sales tax in Ontario (Ministry of Revenue, 2011). Ten of the 12 interviewees stated that the provincial government implementation of the HST had a negative impact on their programs. By some accounts, the HST seemed to have more of a negative impact than the recession itself: "...I don't think [the recession] impacted us in a huge way. I think the HST has affected us more just because the prices have gone up...and I think it's just affected everything in general..." (personal communication, Susan, January 14, 2011). Consumers of the sport programs were displeased since the organizations had to increase the registration fees to pay the new HST. Table 2 presents a summary of the above findings.



Table 2: Summary of the results

Organization/ Department	Number of participants	Number of programs	Shift in SES participation	Price Strategy	Financial assistance	Change in consumer behaviour	Sponsorship
1. Aquatic services	≈	≈	Not available	≈	↑	Yes	Not available
2. Golf courses	↑	≈	Yes	≈	≈	Yes	Not available
3. Community services department	≈	≈	Not available	≈	↑	Not available	Not available
4. Community services department	≈	≈	Not available	≈	↑	Yes	Not available
5. Community services department	≈	≈	Yes	≈	↑	Yes	Not available
6. Boys and Girls Club	≈	≈	Yes	↑	↑	Yes	↓
7. Eager Beaver Baseball club	≈	≈	Not available	≈	↑	Yes	Not available
8. London Skating club	↓	↓	Yes	≈	↑	Yes	Not available
9. YMCA	≈	↑	Not available	≈	↑	Yes	↓
10. Greater London Area Hockey Association	≈	≈	No	↑	↑	No	Not available
11. London Rambler Basketball	≈	≈	Yes	≈	↑	Yes	↑
12. Soccer Associations	≈	≈	Yes	≈	↑	No	↓

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects a recession has on youth sport programs in a local community. The results of this study indicate that the recession had no impact on the participation rates of the sport programs. However, there were a number of underlining processes revealed by this study. It was found that consumers

altered their consumption patterns. For instance, consumers chose to participate in less costly programs and used various financial assistance plans to minimize costs associated with having their children participate in sport related programs. Since consumers altered their consumption patterns, the organizations' main tactics for dealing with the recession was to freeze or only raise prices a small amount in an event to maintain their pre-existing participation levels. Also, programs saw an increase in funding for the public sector through the municipal subsidy plan and for the voluntary sector through the Canadian Tire Jumpstart program.

### 5.1 Implications of the study

These findings are important since it allows organizations to have the opportunity to reflect and learn about how the 2008 recession has impacted youth sport programs. This knowledge can be used if and when future economic downturns occur. Keeping physically active can be beneficial to the overall wellbeing of citizens in communities even during economic hardship. Furthermore, this study can be used to examine the various strategies that can be utilized during the recession. Pricing is a very important strategy for organizations to implement since it was one of the most prevalent determining factors for consumers. Consumers were more drawn to programs that would allow them to experience bargained prices or promotions. This is an important aspect to acknowledge since it will allow organizations to prosper in future recessions by controlling their pricing. Organizations can implement pricing policies during a recession that will help them be more profitable when a recession occurs. Furthermore, consumers were more drawn to programs that were of low cost during the recession. Sport organizations can implement more low cost programs to entice consumers to participate.

Also, consumer research is another application that was utilized during the recent recession. Consumer research allows organizations to understand the events relating to youth sport programs that result in the event of a recession. Having the proper teams involved to research and develop practices and procedures will prepare the organizations to withstand the underlying effects that may transpire as a result of a negative economy. Awareness brought forth as a result of the current study will give organizations the tools necessary to withstand an ever changing economy.

## 5.2 Delimitations and limitations of current study

During the 2008 recession, the private, public and voluntary sectors were all impacted. Since the focus of this study was on the impact of the recession on youth sport programs and most youth sport programs are offered by the public and voluntary sector, this study was delimited to only include the public and voluntary sectors. Furthermore, many cities within the province of Ontario were highly affected by the recession, but due to limitations of time, only one city was selected (i.e., London). Since the focus of this study is on the impact of the recession based on the perceptions of sport providers, sport participants were excluded. In addition, this study only examined amateur sports from the grass-roots to the elite; therefore, professional sports and unorganized sports were not examined.

With every form of methodology there are limitations. Interviewing is limiting since the findings cannot be generalized to a larger population and cannot be replicated (Esterberg, 2002). Thus, this study should not be generalized to other municipalities since the impact of the recession may differ and the populations may have conducted

themselves in a different manner. Also, interviewing is less objective than other methods since personal beliefs and values can interfere with the analytical process. The researcher is aware of these negative aspects of this method and tried to minimize these issues. Collecting some qualitative information assisted in minimizing the negative aspects of this method.

### 5.3 Directions for future research

One important finding that deserves further investigation is the influence of taxes on sport programs. It was indicated that the introduction of the HST had a great impact on the sport programs that were being offered in London during the recession. Future studies could examine how the various tax strategies that the government implements affect sport programs. Also, this study has indicated that consumers change their consumption patterns during a recession. Future studies could examine this further by using a quantitative survey method to increase the understanding as to precisely how consumers alter their consumption patterns during a recession when it comes to sports. In addition, more studies could be conducted to examine how other sport programs were affected by the recession and the overall impact of the recession, including that of the private sector.

PART II: EXTENDED LITERATURE  
REVIEW

## 6.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

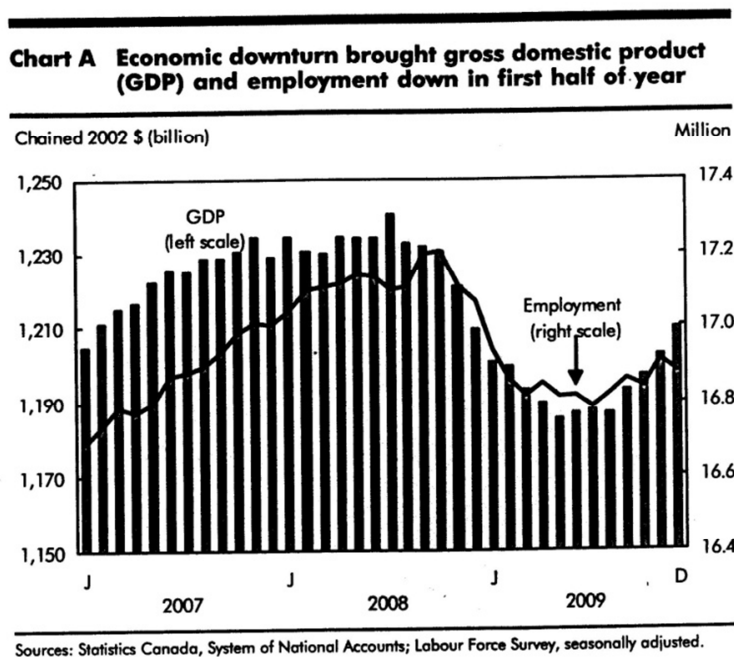
### 6.1 Recession

A recession is a period of time where the real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has a negative value for two consecutive quarters (Parkin & Bade, 2006). Real GDP is “the value of final goods and services produced in a given year when valued at constant prices” (Parkin & Bade, 2006, p. G-7). Furthermore, the real GDP is the broadest form of measurement to examine a country’s economic standing. To determine the real GDP, the prices of the products in the market are converted into constant prices to avoid the influence of inflation and to examine the production growth from one year to the next. To measure the standing of the real GDP, it is calculated against the potential GDP to determine the country’s economic situation. Potential GDP is the production that can be created if all citizens are employed (Parkin & Bade, 2006). During a recession, more positions are lost than created, increasing the unemployment rate, which has a negative impact on the real GDP, creating a cyclical affect (Parkin & Bade, 2006).

Canada was one of the many countries that was affected by the 2008 recession. At the mark of the new millennium, the Canadian economy was strong (Usalcas, 2009). By the beginning of 2008, the Canadian unemployment rate was at a record low of 5.8%. As the year progressed, the economy worsened with an economic crisis eventually establishing and the unemployment rate increased to 6.6% by December (Usalcas, 2009). In 2009, Ontario experienced one of the worst declines, where 121,000 jobs were lost (Usalcas, 2010). By July 2009, employment began an upward trend in full-time positions and the economy began to strengthen (Statistics Canada, 2010a). Since then the

employment levels have become stable (Statistics Canada, 2009b). Even with the economy stabilizing, the unemployment rate was still 1.6% higher in December 2009 than the previous year (Usalcas, 2010). In April 2010, the economy gained 109,000 jobs within the public sector and the unemployment rate decreased to 8.1% (Statistics Canada, 2010a). Within Ontario, 41,000 jobs were reinstated, but unemployment remained at 8.8% (Statistics Canada, 2010a). The manufacturing industry was still losing jobs in April 2010 with 21,000 positions lost (Statistics Canada, 2010a). Even though the economic downturn has been stabilized, this recession was very dramatic due to the sharp rise in unemployment and the quick recovery (Statistics Canada, 2009b). Figure 1 demonstrates the dramatic decrease in employment and GDP.

Figure 1: GDP and employment (Usalcas, 2010).



There were different aspects of the labour force that changed during the 2008 recession. The number of full-time hours decreased at a faster rate than unemployment,

which indicates that individuals had their hours drastically decreased prior to being laid off or fired (Usalcas, 2010). Also, involuntary part-time hours rose during the recession. Involuntary part-time is where individuals prefer full-time work, but are forced to work part-time since they are unable to find full-time positions or their hours have been decreased (Usalcas, 2009). During 2009, the percentage of employees that were working less than 30 hours per week was 26.8%, with the majority of these individuals being men 25 years and over, which is an increase from 22.3% of 2008 (Usalcas, 2010). Furthermore, employment decreased 24.8% for those individuals who made less than \$10 while employment rose for those that were paid more than \$40 per hour (Statistics Canada, 2009b). Also, self-employment increased during the recession as individuals who were unable to find full-time positions needed to find other means of providing the basic necessities for themselves and their families (Statistics Canada, 2008a).

Another element of the labour market that was affected was the job availability for young adults. Individuals between the age of 15 and 24 experienced a decrease in jobs; there was a 10.5% decrease for boys and 6.9% decline for girls (Statistics Canada, 2009b). Students found it difficult to find summer employment during 2009 and those able to find positions had a decrease in their hours worked. On average, students worked 23.4 hours per week (Usalcas, 2010).

## 6.2 Recession and government

There are various ways the government can influence a country's economy. Within Canada there are automatic fiscal policies that become activated by the government when the economic environment changes. These policies are used to stimulate the economy as well as stabilize it. An example of these policies is that when



unemployment increases there is an automatic increase in employment insurance (EI) payments to workers (Parkin & Bade, 2006). There are other ways the government can be effective when dealing with the economy, such as changing taxation, increasing public expenditures and contributing to the economy's stability (Hamernikova et al., 2009). Taxation for the government is very important since it is its main source of revenue. When the real GDP fluctuates, the amount of revenue that the government receives through taxes can be positive or negative (Parkin & Bade, 2006). The Canadian government profited \$53.625 billion from the goods and services tax (GST) alone in 2009 (Statistics Canada, 2010e).

During a recession, the government's profitability decreases and government spending intensifies, which will increase the budget deficit. It is very important for the budget to remain around a certain amount to support important services like health care (Parkin & Bade, 2006). Furthermore, in an interview, with the Canadian Minister of Finance, Jim Flaherty, stated how Canada was going to encounter a large deficit due to the stimulus package (as cited in Maich, 2009). The stimulus package was utilized to enhance the economy and in 2008 the *Canada's Economic Action Plan* was one of the stimulus packages used. During a recession, the government can use the stimulus packages to increase the funding for sport or expenditures can be decreased by cutting programs. Once the economy has been stabilized the government ends the automatic spending, which is used to stimulate demand. Eventually, the government's budget will begin to surplus after the economy has been stabilized (Maich, 2009). In the first quarter of 2010, Canada had a deficit of \$33.6 billion, which was a 13.6% increase from the previous year (Statistics Canada, 2010f). The federal government's deficit has made it

difficult to sustain financial commitments at all the different levels of the government (Searle & Brayley, 2000). Due to the deficit, the government has been reducing the number of programs it is offering. This forced the voluntary sector to take over and implement these programs, increasing the expenditures for these organizations (Tindal, 2005).

The government is not the only sector affected by the economic environment; the voluntary sector must also be concerned. Financing the voluntary sector has become more difficult and the cost of operating voluntary organizations has increased, creating major challenges. Due to the economic instability, private sector organizations find it more difficult to make long term financial commitments to support voluntary organizations (Searle & Brayley, 2000). Since voluntary organizations rely on financial support from both the private and public sector, which are both affected by the economic climate, they too are dealing with financial issues (Cooke, 1994). In addition, already prior to the recession, the government had been decreasing the funding to voluntary organizations (Tindal, 2005). Furthermore, during times of economic recession individuals tend to donate less to charities and voluntary organizations (Searle & Brayley, 2000).

Citizens are concerned with the governments' actions regarding the uses of public spending and the attempt to keep taxes low during a recession since the government affects the country's economic standing (Hamernikova et al., 2009). A study conducted by Hamernikova et al. (2009) determined that expenditures on health, culture and recreation had a positive effect on the economic growth in the Czech Republic, Ireland, Sweden and Finland. The research examined the various government spending habits and

the affect it had on the development of GDP between the years of 1995 and 2006. This study indicated that if the government were to spend more money on sport, there would be a positive impact on the economy. Therefore, from this study we learn that if government was to increase sport funding, additional employment opportunities and other benefits could be created.

Sport is a very important aspect of the economy. Over the last 30 years, sport participation has increased which in turn has increased its economic significance (Lera-López & Rapún-Gárate, 2007). The leisure industry in the UK accounts for over a quarter of all consumer spending and over 10 percent of employment. In Britain, the amount of money that the government receives from the taxation of sport is more than what it subsidizes (Gratton & Taylor, 2000). Since participation has increased and there is a demand for sport within society, sport can be seen as consumption good. How much of the good is created, depends on the demand and the supply (Taks et al., 1994). Sport has become more important than previous years to various social groups, leading to increased demand (Lera-López & Rapún-Gárate, 2007). This has led to an increased significance of sport in a country's economic standing and GDP (Lera-López & Rapún-Gárate, 2005). When consumers use their incomes for sport expenditures there is added value since this economic interaction flows to other sectors. The expenditures in one sector turn into income for other industries (Gratton & Taylor, 2000). Sport is a growing economic influence since consumers are using more of their household expenditures for sport. Consumers also change their consumption patterns during a recession, which may directly impact the revenue streams of voluntary organizations.

### 6.3 Impact of a recession on consumers

Consumers play an important role during an economic downturn because they have the power to influence the market through their patterns of purchasing. During an economic downturn, the demand for labour decreases, which will lower consumers' disposable incomes (Shama, 1978). When an economic crisis occurs, individuals feel less secure in their employment positions (Shama, 1981). When consumers feel that the economy is slowing, individuals may alter their consumption patterns. Consumers may spend more time shopping, looking for bargains and buying fewer products since they are more financial constrained (Shama, 1981). Some consumers eliminate consumption of certain products altogether since they are seen as unnecessary for survival and seen more as a luxury item (Zurawicki & Braidot, 2005).

When consumers purchase a product, durability and price become important features during a recession. Consumers may value money more during an economic downturn; therefore they want durable products since it will allow them to purchase less over a given period of time (Ang et al., 2000). Consumers may change their preference of the products that are being offered by different companies (Shama, 1978). For sport, consumers may change their preferences and participate in activities that are less costly, but have the same physical exertion to save financially (Gratton & Taylor, 2000). Furthermore, individuals may purchase more locally due to lower prices (Ang et al., 2000). Consumers may travel less for sports to save financially on additional expenditures like hotels and gas.

Individuals will examine the features of products, including sports, more in depth to ensure that they purchase the best bargains, allowing for more cautious decision making. Also, consumers become more collective while deciding on products by discussing them with their families and spouses before consumption. Parents are likely to decide together whether their children will participate in a sport during a recession, also allowing for more cautious decision making (Ang et al., 2000).

During an economic downturn, consumers prefer advertising with more information than imagery since it allows them to make more informed decisions when purchasing. Individuals are also more likely to purchase products from companies that provide promotions such as getting a free gift with product purchase (Ang et al., 2000). If sport organizations were to utilize more promotional materials, some consumers might be more enticed to purchase their products.

Loyalty can have a significant impact on whether or not consumers will discontinue the purchasing of a product during a recession. Loyalty is a deeply rooted commitment to re-purchase a service or product despite circumstances that may cause the consumer to change he/she purchasing behavior (Kolter & Keller, 2006). The reason why consumers become loyal to a product is due to the high perceived customer value; therefore, consumers have a high indication of the benefits of that particular product (Kolter & Keller, 2006). Loyal consumers will not consider other brands or products in their decision making process, which becomes valuable to companies. Furthermore, loyal customers are less price sensitive so if the price of the product increases due to an economic downturn, loyal consumers are less likely to change their purchasing decisions. When a customer is loyal to a sport he/she is less likely to switch to another program or

substitute that activity for another (Park & Kim, 2000). For consumers, sport activities can fulfill the needs of their everyday life. Sport is a personal need for consumers since it improves the health of participants and keeps them happy (Grewal et al., 2009).

If the consumer is not loyal to a product he/she may be likely to substitute it for another item. If a product becomes too expensive then the consumer might decide to substitute it for a closely related item that is a cheaper alternative. Also, if the income of an individual decreases then the consumer may look for an alternative (Frank, 1997). The customer may be willing to pay the price to purchase the product, but may not be able to due to he/she income. If there is a change in income, either through job loss or through a decrease in hours, the consumer may be forced to demand fewer products. Consumers will substitute more expensive products for less expensive ones; for example, instead of participating in skiing, the individual may decide to go for a jog instead. Individuals can also opt to substitute a sport for another that has the same physical exertion and requires the same time (Gratton & Taylor, 2000). It is important for companies to create strong strategies to create loyal consumers and to endure a recession. The various strategies that businesses utilize during a recession will be discussed in the next section.

#### 6.4 Impact of a recession on organizations

The strategies that businesses engage in during positive business cycles may become less useful during a recession. Therefore, organizations often adapt their strategies to ensure their survival (Ang et al., 2000). Some organizations relocate or close unprofitable stores due to financial hardship. Companies will also begin to lay off workers or stop production of certain products or services to deal with the decrease in consumer demand and the fierce competition (Koksal & Ozgul, 2007). Downsizing and

layoffs in various companies also occur due to the prices of necessary materials increasing, which results in the cost of production rising (Koksal & Ozgul, 2007).

#### 6.4.1 Pricing

Businesses may change their marketing strategies to stimulate demand for their products (Shama, 1978). During a period of economic growth, businesses use marketing strategies to stimulate compulsive purchasing, but when the economy becomes unstable, consumers become more aware of their consumption (Ang et al., 2000). During such times, sport organizations may adjust the price of their products to stimulate demand (Shama, 1978). Organizations are pressured to lower their prices due to the demands consumers and other businesses are exerting onto them (Ang et al., 2000). Sport organizations may feel the need to lower or freeze their pricing to stimulate demand, but this strategy cannot be relied on for prosperity. Changing the price of a product has a positive short-term affect on demand, but it affects the company's profitability, which in the end will have a negative long-term affect (Koksal & Ozgul, 2007). If the organization does decide to lower its prices, it will be difficult to reverse once the economy improves since consumers may see the new prices as permanent (Ang et al., 2000).

#### 6.4.2 Promotion

Companies may be able to endure an economic crisis if they can focus their marketing in a more effective way. Sport organizations have to determine the appropriate channels and create promotional strategies that will be able to entice individuals from their target demographics to purchase its product. Marketers must determine the appropriate channels to promote their products either through the older channels of

promotion, such as newspapers and commercials, which are becoming less useful, or the new forms, such as social networks and Internet. By having an appropriate mix between the new and old forms of promotion the sport organizations may be able to endure the recession with very little loss in profitability. Furthermore, sport companies must identify who and where the customers are and determine the most effective way to reach them in order to be more successful in an economic crisis (Court, 2008). Since the consumers' purchasing habits adjust during a recession, marketers should pay attention to the new value requirements of customers. Even after the recession ends, consumers' changed purchasing patterns can remain altered. The success of the new marketing strategy in the post-recession environment will depend on the organization's ability to understand the changed patterns of the consumers (Piercy et al., 2010).

The strategies that an organization employs depends on its vision, values and the markets they face, among other aspects. Some organizations may decide not to change their products, but highly alter their promotional strategies (Shama, 1978). For companies to entice consumers, promotional material is highly affective since it allows organizations to communicate to consumers about the bargains that are available (Koksal & Ozgul, 2007). Promotional materials allow consumers to see more value in the sports programs than just the physical exertion that occurs while participating. Furthermore, increasing communication with consumers through advertising and promotions will help with organizations' sustainability through a recession (Koksal & Ozgul, 2007). But when a recession occurs, advertising budgets are usually the first aspects to be reduced (Ang et al., 2000). Roberts (2003) conducted a study using the Profit Impact of Market Strategy (PIMS) database and concluded that companies that do not cut their advertising budgets



are more able to withstand an economic crisis than those that do. Furthermore, companies that increased their marketing budgets showed a smaller decrease in profitability and recovered more quickly afterwards than other organizations that invest less.

#### 6.4.3 Products and market share

Companies can capitalize on new markets that are created by the changing economic environment (Shama, 1978). Some organizations withdraw their products from a particular market segment where they are not enhancing their profile and it is financially costly due to production. Sport organizations may decide to cancel programs due to the lack of participants that are needed and the decrease in revenues from this service. This creates a gap within the market that companies could take advantage of by enhancing consumer appeal for their products and services (Shama, 1981). Furthermore, to help gain market shares, managers have to be able to identify the gaps between the strategies of their competitors and the competitive reality (Sull, 2009a). Sport organizations' managers may decide to venture into new markets to increase their portfolios and create sport programs that do not have a strong presence in their communities. By having focused business models themselves, companies can identify which market segment gaps that they want to take advantage of since they can quickly identify opportunities that coincide with their objectives. Economic downturns reveal flaws within a competitor's business model, which allows managers to seize opportunities (Sull, 2009a).

It is advised that businesses remain in markets where they have a strong position since the brands that are in midrange of the market share are the ones that are most

affected by an economic crisis. Companies should focus their resources on strengthening their existing brands and positioning their products to appeal to more to consumers. Refraining from introducing new products during a recession may also be helpful to organizations since consumers are less likely to be attracted to new products (Ang et al., 2000). If sport organizations have a strong presence in a particular market then they should remain and still provide those programs. Also, sport organizations should try not to introduce any new programs during a recession so that they don't suffer financially.

#### 6.4.4 Consumer Research

Consumer research becomes an important aspect for companies' survival during an economic crisis. It helps businesses to redefine their target markets, their services and their promotional budgets appropriately (Shama, 1978). By conducting costumer research, sport organizations can increase their understanding of the market to be able to promote their programs to the appropriate individuals. Businesses that invest more into research and development have been shown to recover faster than other companies that may not invest as much (Ang et al., 2000; Roberts, 2003).

#### 6.4.5 Employees

Providing additional customer service training during a recession for employees increases the overall performance of organizations (Koksal & Ozgul, 2007). It is not only important for the companies to hire and train more skilled workers, but also managers have to become more resilient themselves during economic hardships. To become more resilient, managers within sport organizations have to respond quickly and constructively to the crisis by moving rapidly from their analysis to action with their focus strictly

forward. Furthermore, managers should focus on the issues and how they can improve the companies' objectives instead of the cause of the problem (Margolis & Stolz, 2010). Also, leaders within sport organizations should learn from the companies that gain a competitive advantage during economic hardship. By understanding how various sport companies gain a competitive edge, it will allow a leader to learn from the strategies and how to succeed in an economic downturn (Rhodes & Stelter, 2010).

Lowering production capacity and the workforce only has a short-term positive effect on businesses (Koksal & Ozgul, 2007). Organizations can withstand the changing economic environment if they modify their strategies appropriately (Koksal & Ozgul, 2007). The changes in the strategies for both consumers and businesses result in a changed relationship, which can contribute to a more profitable outcome if appropriate strategies are utilized (Shama, 1978).

## 6.5 Recession and sport

Sport programs can be affected by an economic downturn, but very few academic studies have analyzed the effects. This section provides a review of eight studies that have addressed this topic. Five studies addressed the impact on sport businesses in the private sector, while only three studies were found that pertain to sport organizations in the voluntary and public sectors. A summary of the studies is provided in Tables 3 and 4.

### 6.5.1 Sport and recession in the private sector

Long (1987) conducted a study in Blaine County, Idaho that examined how the recession affected a recreational region. His study focused on the private sector and, in particular, the skiing industry. Blaine County is part of the Sun Valley ski area and the

Sawtooth National Recreation area. Long examined how different economic activities were affected by studying individuals' wages and the overall employment within this region during the 1979-1983 economic crisis. The various industries that were concentrated on were construction, transportation, retail, services, export demand and local government. On the whole, employment increased within Blaine County; the only sector that decreased was construction. Also, aggregated wages increased in all sectors including construction. Long determined that the increase in employment and wages indicated an increase in demand for recreation during the economic downturn where wages increased by 42.7% and employment by 3.5%. There was a larger increase in employment and aggregated wages within the county than within the state of Idaho where the state of Idaho wages increased by 25.2% and the employment dropped by 4.5%. Overall, the demand for recreation increased by 10% in five years using the employment data and, using the wage data, Long found that the recreation industry increased by 55% over five years. This indicated that the recession had a positive effect on the industry since the increase in the total demand for goods and services justified the increase in employment and wages.

There have been other studies conducted to determine the affect of the recession on sport programs within the private sector. Stuller (2009) found that golf was negatively affected by the recession since the participation rate in the United States decreased from 12% of the population to 8.5%, which is financially significant for the golf industry. Golf can be seen as a luxury good to consumers and, in 2008, 106 golf courses closed due to financial hardship. Also, the value of the courses and revenues decreased since green fee rates declined. Due to the high costs, golf courses were unable to lower green fees, which

hindered their profitability. Golf organizations offered hotel and resorts discounts to promote their golf courses to attract consumers and used low-cost advertising such as the Internet.

Lunn (2010) found that participation rates in expensive sports, which were identified as golf, individual pursuits and gym memberships, decreased in Ireland during the 2008 recession period. One in seven individuals discontinued their gym membership and males had the highest rate of decrease in sport participation. Also, individuals with a lower socio-economic status were more likely to decrease their participation, especially young adults.

Fullerton & Morgan (2009) examined sport sponsorship and products during the 2008 recession and analyzed how companies approached these aspects of their organizations. Different sport organizations changed their marketing mix approach during an economic crisis. Various companies, like McDonalds, spent less on sport sponsorship since it was not seen as the best approach to intrigue consumers. Some companies terminated sponsorship contracts to decrease expenditures. During the 2008 recession, for example the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) has experienced a decrease in sponsorship by \$200 million; sponsorship has been a large source of revenue in the past. Despite the overall decrease in sponsorship activity, some companies did choose to continue or enter into sponsorship deals due to the falling prices of sponsorship packages. Furthermore, sport products are also being impacted by the recession. Some sport companies have stopped production of certain products to decrease its financial expenditures. Others have eliminated their participation in certain markets

due to the lack of financial security and the competitive nature of the market (Fullerton & Morgan, 2009).

There was only one article that was discovered by the researcher that discussed youth programs in the private sector. Williams (2009) determined that during the recession demand for youth conditioning classes and aerobics increased in Vancouver, BC. The author attributes this increase to consumers improved awareness of the positive health benefits of sport (Williams, 2009). The programs that were examined in this study were offered through a gym in the private sector. The studies within this section demonstrate that when a recession occurs, participation in sport programs alters, but the direction of the change (positive or negative) is inconclusive. Table 3 provides a summary of the above mentioned studies.

Table 3: Overview of empirical research on the impact of a recession on sport organizations and participation in private sector

<b>Place and Country of study</b>	<b>Type of sport industries/ organizations</b>	<b>Sample/Data collection</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Impact of recession</b>
Blaine County, Idaho (Long, 1987)	Skiing and recreation area	Document analysis	Examination of employment rate and wage information in different sectors of the local economy	Except for construction, employment increased in the different industries; wages increased in all industries; showing the recession had a positive impact.
North America (Stuller, 2009)	Golf Courses	Consultants, promoters	Examination of promoters within the golf industry that use various strategies to increase participation.	The green fee rates decreased; 106 golf courses closed; participation rate decreased from 12% to 8.5% of the population
Ireland (Lunn, 2010)	Sport participation	National survey examining sport participation among individuals 16 of age and over	Examination of sport participation during a recession	Sport Participation decreased; young males were more impacted; more expensive sports lost participants.
United States of America, Asia Pacific, Australia, England (Fullerton & Morgan, 2009)	Sport marketing	Various corporations	Examination of different companies' strategies in a recession and the various trends.	Due to the recession marketers changed their strategies to save money and appeal to the consumer. Sponsorships decreased.
Vancouver, BC (Williams, 2009)	Sport Participation	Interview with a gym owner	Examination of sport participation during a recession	Youth conditioning classes and aerobics increased in participation

### 6.5.2 Sport and recession in public and voluntary sectors

The public sector is affected differently from the private sector during a recession. Rutemillier (2008) concluded that in the U.S., swimming in public pools was seen as recession-proof since parents would keep their children involved in the programs. Regardless of the recession, parents chose to keep their children in swimming to build self confidence, and were willing to sacrifice on household necessities to maintain participation. Some swimming organizations decided to decrease parents' expenses by decreasing the travel. Furthermore, the costs of operating swimming facilities increased during the recession and community pools received less funding from the government forcing organizations to adjust their budgets. It became a concern for swim clubs that the government would not be able to maintain the swimming programs, but USA Swimming, the national governing body for the sport, injected some of their surplus, which they had saved for times of financial need. Therefore, even with the budget setbacks, facility coordinators could operate their swimming programs/their pools at a satisfactory level.

Roberts (2009) found that adult sport league membership rose during difficult economic times. This was attributed to the cost advantage of team sports over individual sports. The coordinator of the Maryland county adult league in the United States determined that "participation seems to spike during a recession" (as cited in Roberts, 2009, p. 23). All costs to participants were covered by the registration fee. League sports are also cheaper to administer (Roberts, 2009).

Zurawicki & Braidot (2005) surveyed middle class households to determine the effects of an economic crisis on consumer behavior in Argentina. They found that during



an economic downturn, individuals played more sports in public places like soccer fields to save financially. Consumers decided to play on public fields to save the money that was previously being spent on sport clubs.

Overall, these studies on the public sector indicate that participation in their sports programs remained stable or increased during an economic crisis. For this, it is concluded that the recession does not affect sport participation in public and voluntary organizations and when changes are apparent, they are positive. Even Stuller (2009) found that public golf courses were having a higher level of participation compared to private sector courses since public courses are less expensive. The private courses had to open their memberships to the general public in an attempt to increase the level of participation. It could be expected that public sector programs benefit from the recession through an increase in the number of participants. However, more expensive programs may suffer due to the financial demand being placed on consumers since sport participation is cost sensitive, which is demonstrated through the studies that were examined in the private sector. Most studies demonstrated change in participation rates during an economic crisis. Table 4 provides a summary of the above mentioned studies.

Table 4: Overview of empirical research on the impact of a recession on sport organizations and participation in the public and voluntary sectors

<b>Place and Country of study</b>	<b>Type of sport industries/ organizations</b>	<b>Sample/ Data Collection</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Impact of recession</b>
United States of America (Rutemillier, 2008)	Community pools and leagues	Operators of various pools	Examination of how parents and swimming pools are affected by the recession	Swimming is seen as recession proof; the recession does not impact participation, but will influence city's budgets.
5 different counties across United States of America (Roberts, 2009)	Local adult sport leagues	Coordinators of leagues and participants	Examination of various local leagues and the strategies used to ensure customer return; lower conflict between participants, keeping the league exciting and social.	Participation increased due to lower financial strain on participants.
Argentina (Zurawicki & Braidot, 2005)	Public parks	Surveyed middle class households	This article examined how consumers are affected by a recession and their various strategies of consumption.	Local population makes more use of public area for activities to reduce costs.

## 6.6 Impact of a recession on sport consumers

As previously stated, the impact of an economic downturn on sport organizations and participation varies according to the type of organization and the type of sport being practiced. There is very little understanding as to how youth consumers react during a recession. The next few sections discuss consumption patterns of youth in general to establish their decision making process in everyday life for further understanding.

### 6.6.1 Sport consumer behavior

Shank (2009) identified three types of sport consumers; spectators, sponsors and participants. Spectators are consumers that observe sporting events through either

attendance or through the media. Sponsors purchase the rights to associate their names or products with an athlete, a sports team or event. Sponsoring assists companies with their marketing, media and personal objectives by providing another outlet to increase their revenue. Both sport spectatorship and sport sponsorship can be negatively affected by the recession (Fullerton & Morgan, 2009).

Even though Shank (2009) identified three types of consumers within the sport industry, consumption of sporting goods can be seen as another form of consumer behavior. There are different factors that impact the consumption behavior of youth in general. It could be expected that these factors affect their sport consumption behavior in a similar manner. For instance, significant others such as parents, peers, role models, but also the media can impact youths' consumption patterns (Stevens, Lathrop & Bradish, 2005). Females are more likely to be influenced by their mothers when it comes to purchasing decisions. Females see their mothers as the decision makers and are more inclined to listen to them whereas males pay more attention to their fathers. The same sex relationships affects the consumption patterns of youth, but males rely more on themselves for decision making when it comes to sport product consumption than females do (Stevens et al., 2005). Also, the communication that youth have with their family members influences their patterns of consumption. As primary socializing agents, family members affect the patterns of consumption through the formation of beliefs, norms, and standards. Youth are socialized to believe and think in a certain way, which influences their product purchasing. Parents influence the development of the basic rationale for consumption (Moschis, 1985).

Youth's peers also influence purchasing decisions. Youth seek information and guidance from their peers before making a decision, but as they age, this influence decreases (Moschis, 1978). In addition, role models play a significant function in youths' understanding of the marketplace and products. Athlete role models influence youth through materialism since it enables consumers to desire a certain product by having the athlete be a creditable spokesperson. Youth desire what an athlete is selling them through product endorsements (Clark, Martin & Bush, 2001).

Youth have more freedom when purchasing sporting goods than they do when purchasing specialty or other products that can be socially impactful (Moschis, Moore & Stephens, 1977). Youth purchase sporting goods for a sense of independence since they are the key decision maker (Stevens et al., 2005). As males and females age, they become more understanding of the pricing of certain products, allowing them to be more price conscious (Moschis, 1978). Males spend more money on sport products than females do (Moschis et al., 1977). Furthermore, youth that have a higher rate of participation in sports are willing to spend more on sporting items (Stevens et al., 2005). In general, parents support their son's athletic development by purchasing more expensive products than they do for their daughters (Stevens et al., 2005).

During a recession, sportswear vendors should be aware that youth are more cautious while purchasing, but will not stop consuming. Youth are concerned about the effects of the economy, but are less worried than young adults since their parents are more likely to protect them from the impacts of the economy. Also, youth are less likely to understand fully what state the economy may be in. Parents will spend more time discussing with their children budgeting to ensure that they spend less (Kaplan, 2009).

### 6.6.2 Youth sport participation

Sport participation is difficult to define since it is a part of a broad range of leisure activities. According to Gratton & Taylor (2000), some researchers argue that it is difficult to have an objective definition of sport participation since it is reliant on personal perception. What is seen as sport to one may not be seen as sport to another since some activities are categorized as more active sport and others as leisure activities. Woods (2007) defined sport participation as an "...institutionalized competitive activity that involves physical skill and specialized facilities or equipment and is conducted according to an accepted set of rules to determine a winner" (p. 7). Kidd (1996) provided a different and broader definition of sport participation: "... any form of competitive physical activity, without regard to place, period, rules or meaning" (p. 12). Moreover, sport participation is defined differently for various age groups. Statistics Canada (2008d), for instance, defines sport participation for children as "...sports in which children regularly participated at least once a week during the 12 months prior to the survey" (p. 13). Adult sport participation is defined as team or organized activities, participated in "at least once a week during the season or for a certain period of the year" (Statistics Canada, 2008c, p. 17). Scheerder, Vanreusel, Taks, and Renson (2005) defined active sport participation for adolescents as "at least more than one hour of leisure time sports activity per week considered over a whole year, disregarding PE sports practices" (p. 8) in the school curriculum. Whereas adult sport participation was defined as "a physical activity that requires a significant rate of exertion and takes place in a sportive context" (p. 221) and was practiced at least once in the previous year (Scheerder, Vanreusel, Taks & Renson, 2002).

Shank (2009) distinguished sport participants into two broad classifications: participants in unorganized sports and participants in organized sports. Unorganized sport encompasses physical activities that are not produced by an external authority; for instance street hockey. Shank (2009) defined organized sport as “...sporting competitions that are sanctioned and controlled by an authority such as a league association or sanctioning body” (p. 14). Within organized sports there are two forms of participants: amateur and professional. Professional sports are classified by their minor or major league status where players receive compensation for participating; while in the context of amateur sports, athletes do not receive compensation for participating. Amateur sports include recreational youth programs at the elite and instructional level. For the purpose of this study, Shank’s definition of organized sport participation will be adapted. Since the focus will be on youth, we will be dealing with the amateur level, including programs of various levels.

#### 6.6.3 Acclaimed benefits of youth sport participation

Individuals participate in sport for the pursuit of pleasure, skill, excellence and/or health (Chelladurai, 2001). Sports are an important aspect in the lives of many children and youth since it may advance their health and well being. By increasing the level of a child’s participation within healthy boundaries, they increase their motor skills, learn about society’s expectations, learn to communicate with others, build friendships, and develop skills (Law, Petrenchik, King, & Hurley, 2007). Research has found that children and youth with low levels of physical activity increase their risk of cardiovascular disease (Westersta, Barnekow-Bergkvist & Jansson, 2005). Also, activities that are organized out of school have been shown to be beneficial to children, especially those that live in high

risk environments, since through sport participation children may reduce behavioural and emotional problems (Law et al., 2007). It is also claimed that sport can decrease crime rates by providing individuals relief from boredom, increase employment perspectives, increase self esteem and provides individuals with positive role models (Gratton & Taylor, 2000). Given these acclaimed benefits, stimulating sport participation among youth remains important, even during an economic downturn.

#### 6.6.4 Youth sport participation trends in Canada

Statistics Canada (2008d) indicated that regular participation of children and youth in organized sport activities (as defined above) has decreased since 1992, especially among boys. However, even with a decline in participation, boys are still more involved in sport than girls (Statistics Canada, 2008d). Canadians between the ages of 15 and 18 showed the highest rate of participation, but even this has declined from 77% in 1992 to 59% in 2005 (Statistics Canada, 2008c). Furthermore, only 51% of children between the ages of 5 to 14 participate in a sport in 2005 compared to the 57% in 1992 and approximately half of these children participated in more than one sport. Of the Canadian children participating in sport in 2005, children living in smaller towns and cities accounted for the highest rate of participation (Statistics Canada, 2008b). In 1992, swimming was the most frequently participated activity for both boys and girls; in 2005, soccer became the most frequent activity and was played by 44% of children between the ages of 5 to 14. Of the sports commonly available to children, soccer was the most popular, followed by ice hockey, swimming and baseball (Statistics Canada, 2008c).

#### 6.6.5. Youth sport suppliers

The sport industry consists of different classifications of sport products that are created by organizations. These sporting goods and services are created for the benefit of the general public. Goods are tangible products produced and consumed by individuals at a later time: for example, merchandise (Chelladurai, 2001). A service is produced by an organization during the time it is enjoyed by the consumer; for example a football game. Services are intangible since consumers are unable to determine the quality of a product before it is produced (Chelladurai, 2001). Thus, the consumer uses previous experiences and the reputation of the organization to determine the quality of the product before participation. Every organization differs in the services that it provides for consumers. Within sport, participation programs are the services that are offered to engage individuals in a form of physical activity. If the client is physically unable to participate in an activity he/she is unlikely to consume the service; therefore sport participation depends on the clients' ability (Chelladurai, 2001).

There are three different sectors that provide sport participant services to consumers, including youth: the commercial, the public and the voluntary sectors. These sectors are determined by their source of funding. The private sector is a collection of organizations that receive their funding from private contributions or capital investments for their operational procedures (Chelladurai, 2001). Consumers receive services at a cost and the organization has an ultimate objective of being profitable (Karlis, 2004). The public sector consists of government agencies at the federal, provincial, regional or local level that provide services and programs to all citizens. The government is involved in providing and promoting sport and physical activity for the general well being of society



(Searle & Brayley, 2000; Chelladurai, 2001). The government agencies receive their funding through tax monies that are acquired through the federal, provincial, and municipal levels. Since there are different agencies that provide sporting opportunities, the role of the government is, among others, to create partnerships with organizations in other sectors and change certain established relationships to enhance the sport system (Thibault & Harvey, 1997). The voluntary sector consists of associations that are run by volunteers and receive funding through relationships with organizations in the public and private sectors (Chelladurai, 2001). Programs offered by the public and voluntary sector will be the focus of this study and will be discussed further.

Within the public sector, each level of the government has its own mandate and function with regard to the delivery and provision of sport. Some government agencies are directly involved in the production of sport while others are more indirectly involved (Searle & Brayley, 2000). The federal government is responsible for implementing laws that form the policies and legislation of the different provinces and territories within Canada. The mandate of the federal government is to promote health and well-being (Karlis, 2004). The federal and provincial governments' involvement in sport was established by the 1961 Fitness and Amateur Sport Act (Searle & Brayley, 2000). Each province and territory varies in the mandate that they have established for sports and they act as a catalyst for the development of programs (Karlis, 2004). There are provincial departments that provide sport opportunities, but their main functions are to provide financial aid, leadership, planning assistance, regulation and other technical support (Searle & Brayley, 2000). The development and implementation of different programs occurs at the municipal level. Municipalities implement programs to meet the specific

needs of the community (Karlis, 2004). They are involved in providing facilities, leadership support for local clubs, regulation and implementing programs (Searle & Brayley, 2000). The various programs that the municipalities provide depend on the number of participants. If the participation rates become too low, the service will then be seen as unnecessary and will no longer be offered (Karlis, 2004). Smaller municipalities rely on volunteers to implement services (Searle & Brayley, 2000). The public sector provides a wide variety of programs through well trained civil servants and volunteers (Searle & Brayley, 2000).

All government agencies are not-for-profit since the revenue created is labeled as a surplus to be used in the future for any critical situation (Chelladurai, 2001). In some cases, the government subsidizes particular programs offered by the voluntary and commercial sectors to achieve a more adequate distribution of resources. To justify subsidies, the benefits of the sport services must outweigh the financial cost (Gratton & Taylor, 2000). The reason why government agencies are involved in providing and subsidizing sport programs is due to market failures. The private markets are unable to provide a large variety of services that adequately accommodate society's needs; therefore the government establishes other various services (Gratton & Taylor, 2000). In the past, the Canadian government has been a stable source of funding for sport activities, which has allowed various organizations to expect funding (Thibault & Harvey, 1997). A sound and stable economy allowed the public sector to maintain the programs that it provided, but during times of fiscal constraint certain sport services receive less funding and may be removed (Karlis, 2004). When the government experiences fiscal restraint, funding for specific programs could become an issue and certain sport organizations may

receive less government assistance. Therefore, organizations are forced to determine innovative ways to maintain their operations (Thibault & Harvey, 1997).

The government is not legally obligated to provide sport services, but does so because sport participation is considered a 'merit good' since it increases the health benefits of participants, and many other benefits as discussed above (Searle & Brayley, 2000; Gratton & Taylor, 2000). Government stimulates the consumption of merit goods because it results in positive external benefits (Cooke, 1994). In addition, it provides an opportunity for the government to sustain the country's economic standing through employment opportunities (Thibault & Harvey, 1997). Sport acts as an economic stimulus by creating jobs, by helping to relieve market failures in the private sector, and by attracting manufacturers to a particular area. By improving facilities and the sporting system within a community, there are opportunities for cities to improve their images, attract tourists and increase inward investments (Gratton & Taylor, 2000). Furthermore, governments sustain their financial income through the taxation of the sporting industry's employment and sales taxes (Thibault & Harvey, 1997).

The voluntary sector consists of private organizations that do not strive for financial profitability (Searle & Brayley, 2000). They provide sport programs for individuals to assist in their personal development (Thibault & Harvey, 1997). These organizations collaborate with both the private and public sector for financial support and in some cases the private sector also helps with the management of different voluntary associations (Chelladurai, 2001). There are voluntary organizations at the local, regional, provincial, national and international level, which were all created to benefit society (Thibault & Harvey, 1997). Furthermore, voluntary organizations vary in their overall

structure. Some organizations are formally operated with a written constitution and elected or appointed officials; whereas others consist of informal networks of individuals (Karlis, 2004). Also, some voluntary associations do not have a clear organizational purpose and/or definite criteria for membership (Chelladurai, 2001). The voluntary sector relies mainly on volunteers to maintain and sustain services, but there can be some paid staff within these associations (Karlis, 2004). Volunteers are unpaid workers that operate out of free-will and are advocates, providers and fundraisers for local programs and services (Karlis, 2004; Searle & Brayley, 2000). Many sport programs could not exist without the support of volunteers. Overall, there is very little indication of how the recession has impacted youth sport programs in the public and voluntary sector. This is the focus of this research project.

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## 8.0 APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Questions of the semi-structured interview

Name:  
Job title:  
Date:  
Location:  
Start time:  
Stop time:

Identify type of interviewee:

1. Manager within the Community Services department
2. Manager of various sport programs within Community Services department
3. Member of community sport program
4. Other (Specify):.....

### **Protocol**

The interviewer introduces herself (hand out student card)

The purpose of the study is repeated

The letter of consent and audio forms are signed

*[Start the tape recorder]*

### **Ice Breaker Questions:**

What is your current position in the context of youth sport programs offered city of London?

Probes: Title, function(s), responsibilities

Were you in the same position during the 2008 recession?

**If No:** Please describe the title, function(s), and responsibilities in the framework of your position during that time.

### **Perceptions:**

What is your overall perception of the impact the recession had on sport participation in London? (SQ3)

How did the recent recession impact the youth sport program(s) that you are/were responsible for/involved in? (SQ1)

Probes: positive, negative, or none. Can you elaborate?

What aspects of, and to what extent were your program(s) impacted? (SQ2)

Probes: the amount of programs offered, the number of registered participants, the number of classes offered, the hours of operation, type of programs(e.g., shift from travel to house league), ...

#### **If negatively impacted:**

- What do you feel were the reasons for the decline?
- What were some of the reasons that participants gave for leaving your program(s)?
- Is the change in enrollment directly related to the recession? Why?

#### **If positively impacted:**

- What do you feel were the reasons for the increase in participation?

- What were some of the reasons that participants gave for enrolling in your program(s)?
- Is the change in enrollment directly related to the recession? Why?

Did you have the impression that low and high income families reacted differently to keep their children active in the/your sport program(s) during the recession? Please elaborate. (SQ6)

Probe: Location of facilities and socio-economic status in dwelling area.

Other demographic characteristics: Did you perceive any difference in enrolment of immigrants, or between boys and girls, and/or younger and older participants during the recession?

Do you have a feeling that parents and/or the youth participants looked for 'best bargains' or 'cheaper' sport programs or alternatives to lower their financial costs to participate? Please elaborate (SQ7)

Probe: Switching sport programs (e.g., from hockey to basketball); or switching sport levels (e.g., shift from travel to house league),

### **Sport Programs Initiatives:**

Did your organization make adjustments to deal with the affects of the 2008 recession? Please elaborate (SQ5)

Probes: What adjustments did your organization make to its marketing strategies?

What adjustments did your organization make to its financial strategies?

What were some other strategies that your organization used to deal with the impact of the recession?

Are you aware of any interventions from the various levels of government that may have affected the offering of youth sport programs during and following the recession? (SQ4)

Probes: hours of operation, subsidies, number of employees

**Wrapping up:**

Would you like to add anything else about the 2008 recession that you think might be relevant to the study?

Is it possible for you to provide me participation numbers of your organization and an overview of your registration fees for the last 10 years?

**If yes:** What would be the most convenient way to provide this information to me? (e.g., pick up in person, send by e-mail, calling by phone, ...), ....

**If no:** Is there somebody else I could contact to receive this information?

I will send you a summary of the results of this research project. Can you please confirm your contact information (either e-mail address or regular mailing address).

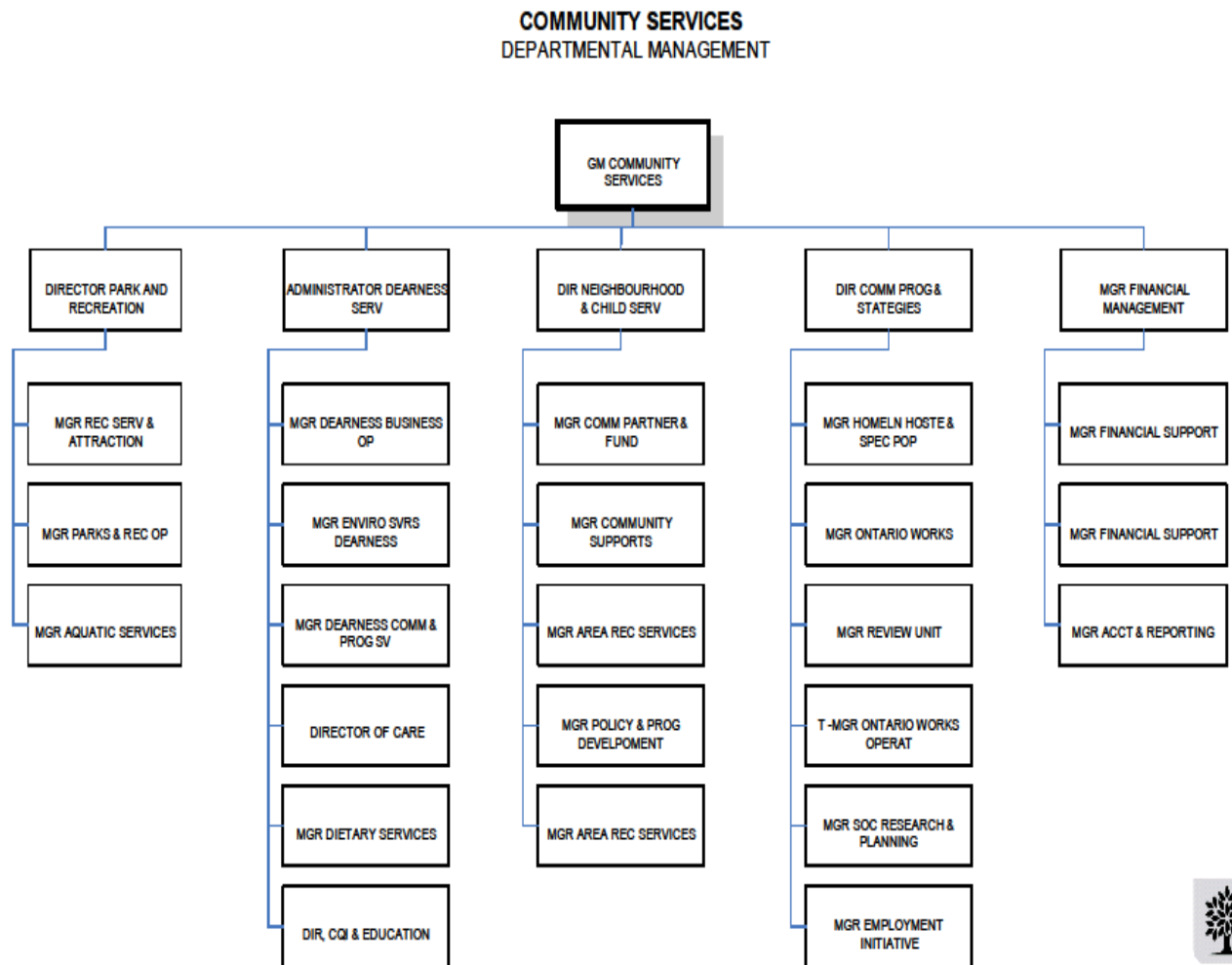
.....

.....

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**Thank you very much for your collaboration.**

Appendix B: Organizational chart for management positions (City of London, 2008b)



## Appendix C: Coding scheme used in analysis

Name: Definition

### Node (122)

**sport type:** the background info about the sports examined

**Multi sport:** the multi sport individuals that were interviewed

**single sports:** the single sport individuals that were interviewed

**Organization:** the type of organization examined

**organization objective and function:** the actual objective and function of the organization

**ORG. promotion:** how the org. promotes their programs and what they do

**Public:** the interviews that concentrated on the public sector

**not for profit:** the interviews that concentrated on the not for profit sector

**Gender:** gender of interviewee

**job title:** job title of interviewees

**information of current position:** roles, title, responsibilities, functions

**similar positions during recession:** if job title was different during recession, what was their role then including responsibilities, function, title

**Yes:** did the individuals possess the same position during recession

**No:** if the individuals had a different position, then what it was and entitled

**Managers:** the interviews that had managers of various sports

**Presidents:** the interviews that had presidents of various sports

**Treasurer:** the individuals that were interviewed that were treasurers

**VP:** the individuals that were VP of various sports

**impact overall:** what was the perception of the overall impact

**positive impact overall:** the positive impacts of the recession

**negative impact overall:** the negative impacts of recession



<b>none overall:</b> no impact on sport programs
<b>adult programs:</b> how the recession impacted adult programs
<b>positive adult:</b> were the adult programs positively impacted
<b>negative adult:</b> were the adult programs negatively impacted
<b>private sector:</b> how the private sector was influenced by the recession
<b>impact on youth sport programs:</b> the impact the recession had on youth sport programs
<b>none YSP:</b> if they saw no impact on their sport programs
<b>none reason for same YSP:</b> why the programs remained the same
<b>none participants reasons YSP:</b> participants reason why they were not affected by recession
<b>none relation to recession YSP:</b> how the no impact is related to recession
<b>negative YSP:</b> if the sport had a negative impact
<b>neg. reasons for decline YSP:</b> the various reasons why the sport was negatively impacted
<b>neg. participants reasons YSP:</b> the various reasons why participants left the program
<b>neg. relation to recession YSP:</b> how was the negative impact related to recession
<b>positive YSP:</b> if the sport had a positive impact
<b>pos. reason for increase YSP:</b> the various reasons why they saw an increase
<b>pos. participant reasons YSP:</b> the various reasons why participants joined the program
<b>pos. related to recession YSP:</b> how the positive impact is related to recession
<b>aspects and extent of impact:</b> the aspects and what extent the programs were impacted
<b>types of programs:</b> how the types of programs were impacted by recession
<b>type of programs UP:</b> if the types of programs increased
<b>types of programs DOWN:</b> if the types of programs decreased
<b>type of programs NO CHANGE:</b> if the types of programs had no change
<b>number of classes:</b> how the number of classes offered was affected by recession
<b>Number of classes UP:</b> if the recession increased the number of classes

<b>Number of classes DOWN:</b> if the recession decreased the number of classes
<b>Number of classes NO CHANGE:</b> if the recession had no impact on the number of classes
<b>facility use of participants:</b> how the facility use has changed due to recession
<b>facility use DOWN:</b> how the facility use by participants decreased
<b>Fees:</b> how the recession influenced the fees to participate
<b>fees UP:</b> if the recession increased the fees
<b>fees DOWN:</b> if the recession decreased the fees
<b>fees NO CHANGE:</b> if the recession had no impact on the fees
<b>number of participants:</b> how the number of registered participants were impacted by recession
<b>Number of participants UP:</b> if the recession increased the number of participants
<b>number of participants DOWN:</b> if the recession decreased the number of participants
<b>Number of participants NO CHANGE:</b> if the recession had no impact on the number of participants
<b>amount of programs:</b> how the amount of programs offered was impacted by recession
<b>amount of programs UP:</b> if the recession increased the amount of programs
<b>amount of programs DOWN:</b> if the recession decreased the amount of programs
<b>amount of program NO CHANGE:</b> if the recession had no impact on the amount of programs
<b>hours of operation:</b> how the hours of operation was impacted by recession
<b>hours of operation UP:</b> if the recession increased the hours of operation
<b>hours of operation DOWN:</b> if the recession decreased the hours of operation
<b>hours of operation NO CHANGE:</b> if the recession had no impact on the hours of operation
<b>donations and sponsorships:</b> how donations and sponsorships were impacted by the recession. Also, the various ways that the org. are sponsored or receive donations
<b>donations and sponsorship UP:</b> if the recession increased the donations and sponsorship
<b>donations and sponsorship DOWN:</b> if the recession decreased the donations and sponsorship
<b>donations and sponsorships NO CHANGE:</b> if the recession had no impact on the donations and sponsorship

<b>number of staff:</b> how the recession impacted the number of staff running the program
<b>number of staff UP:</b> if the recession increased the number of staff
<b>number of staff DOWN:</b> if the recession decreased the number of staff
<b>number of staff NO CHANGE:</b> if the recession had no impact on the number of staff
<b>impact on revenue:</b> how the recession influenced the profitability of org.
<b>impact on revenue UP:</b> if the recession increased the impact on revenue
<b>impact on revenue DOWN:</b> if the recession decreased the impact on revenue
<b>impact on revenue NO CHANGE:</b> if the recession had no impact on the impact on revenue
<b>non registered programs:</b> how the recession influenced non registered programs and what these programs consist of
<b>non registered programs UP:</b> if the recession increased the non registered programs
<b>non registered programs DOWN:</b> if the recession decreased the non registered programs
<b>non registered programs NO CHANGE:</b> if the recession had no impact on the non registered programs
<b>subsidy program:</b> how the subsidy program was influenced by the recession
<b>subsidy program UP:</b> if the recession increased the subsidy program
<b>subsidy program DOWN:</b> if the recession decreased the subsidy program
<b>subsidy program NO CHANGE:</b> if the recession had no impact on the subsidy program
<b>high and low income families:</b> how high and low income families reacted differently to the recession in order to still be able to participate
<b>Immigrants:</b> how the enrollment of immigrants may have changed due to recession
<b>boys and girls:</b> if the enrollment of boys and girls changed due to recession
<b>younger and older:</b> how the enrollment of older and younger kids may have changed due to recession
<b>org. affiliation to high and low income families:</b> how the organization is affiliated to various classes
<b>geographic location of facility:</b> if various facilities were impacted differently due to socioeconomic status of neighbourhood
<b>best bargains and cheaper alternatives:</b> how the participants or parents may have looked for best bargains and or cheaper alternatives to lower financial cost
<b>switching sport programs:</b> in order to lower financial strain participants switched sport programs

<b>switching sport level:</b> in order to lower financial strain participant may have switched sport level
<b>Travelling:</b> amount of travelling in competitive leagues
<b>Source of funding:</b> how consumers would use various sources of funding to make it easier financial to participate
<b>funding Subsidies:</b> how consumers used subsidies to help them participate
<b>Jump Start:</b> How consumers used jump start to be able to participate in programs
<b>payment plans:</b> how individuals use various payment plans during recession
<b>tailored strategies:</b> how the organization may have made adjustments to deal with impact of recession
<b>Marketing:</b> how the organization made adjustments to price, place, promotion, product to deal with impact of recession
<b>Price:</b> how the price of the programs were influenced by the recession
<b>Product:</b> how the product of the programs were influenced by the recession
<b>financial strategies:</b> how the org. made adjustments to their financial strategy to deal with impact of recession
<b>Place:</b> how the place of the programs were influenced by the recession
<b>Marketing strategies promotion:</b> how the promotion of the programs were influenced by the recession
<b>Other:</b> any other strategies the org. adjusted to deal with impact of recession
<b>didn't change Tailored strategies:</b> if the org. did not change or implement any new strategies
<b>government interventions:</b> any interventions from the various levels of government that may have affected sport program
<b>gov. subsidies:</b> how the government helped with the subsidy program
<b>Grants:</b> if the program received any grants to help program
<b>number of employees:</b> if the gov. affected the number of employees
<b>government and facilities:</b> how the government impacted facilities and the use of them
<b>government intervention NO CHANGE:</b> if there was no change in the way the government intervened
<b>added information:</b> added information that the participant found to be relevant to study
<b>Other aspects:</b> other aspects that affected the organization
<b>GST:</b> how GST influenced the organization
<b>Minimal wages:</b> how the recent increase influenced the organization

**HST:** how the implementation of HST influenced the org.

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**competition of other entertainment:** how the competition for other entertainments influenced the programs

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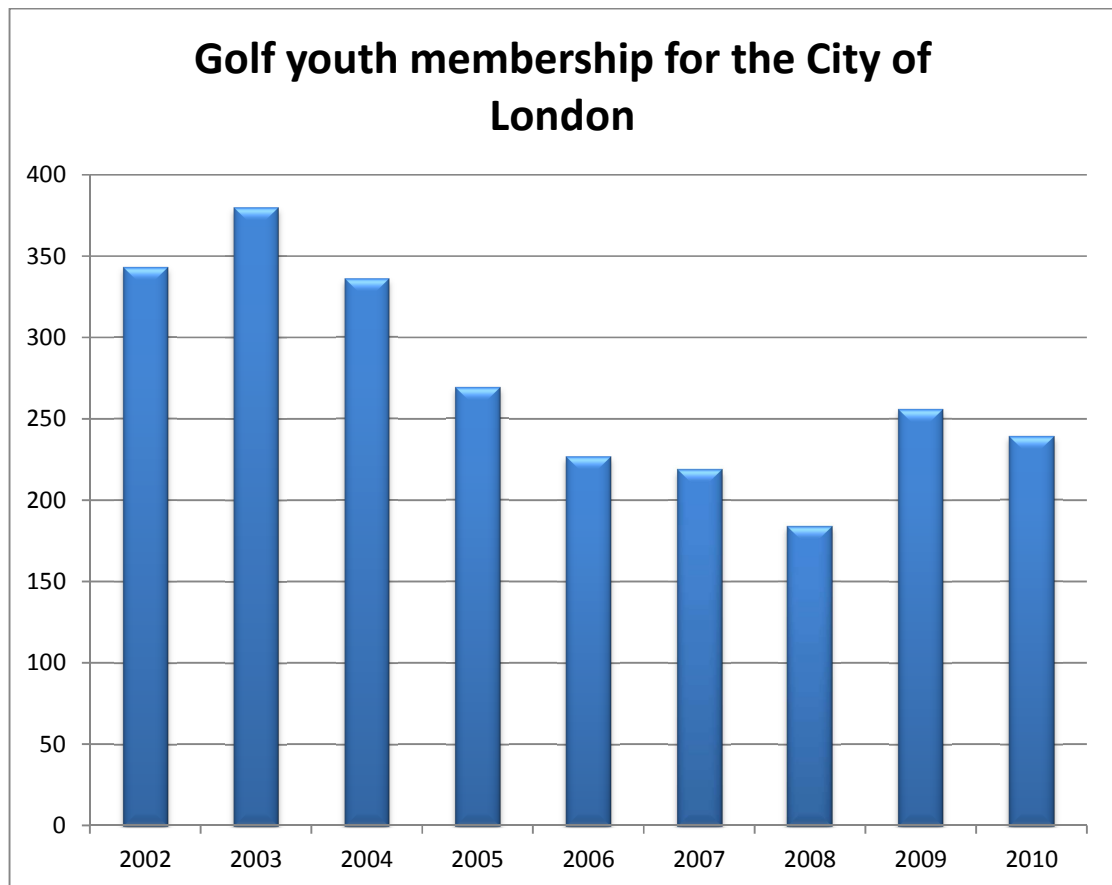
**trends and participants numbers before recession:** when participants talk about their numbers and trends before and during recession

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Appendix D: Golf youth membership rates for municipal golf courses in the City of London (personal communication, Bill, February 4, 2011)

	2002*	2003*	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total	343	380	336	269	227	219	184	256	239

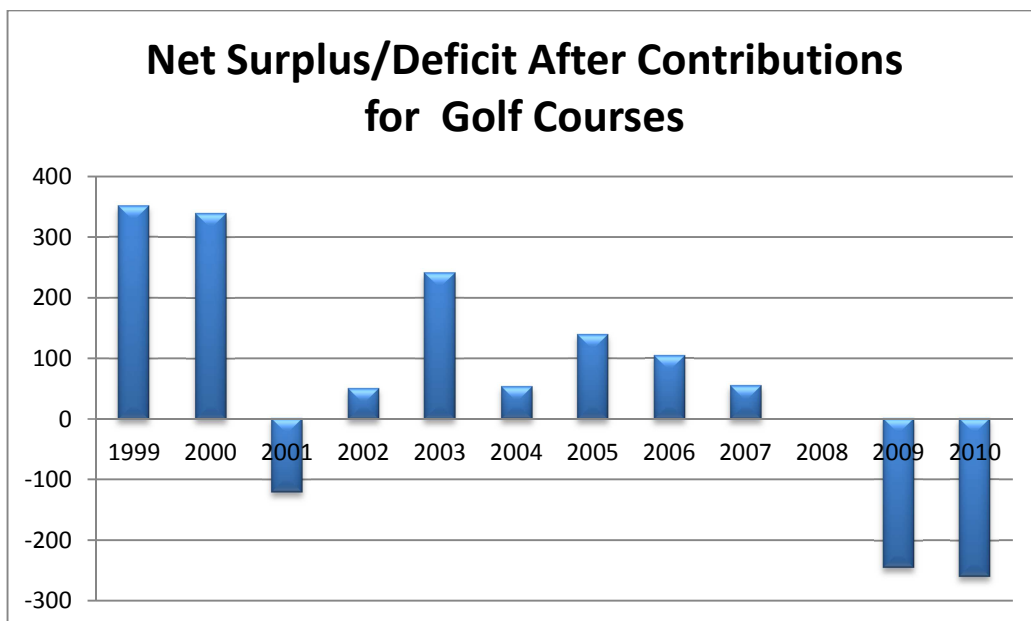
\*In 2003 and 2002 the memberships were only counted to May 23. Therefore, the Interviewee added 20 more members each year.



Appendix E: Net surplus for all three municipal golf courses in the City of London  
(personal communication, Bill, February 4, 2011)

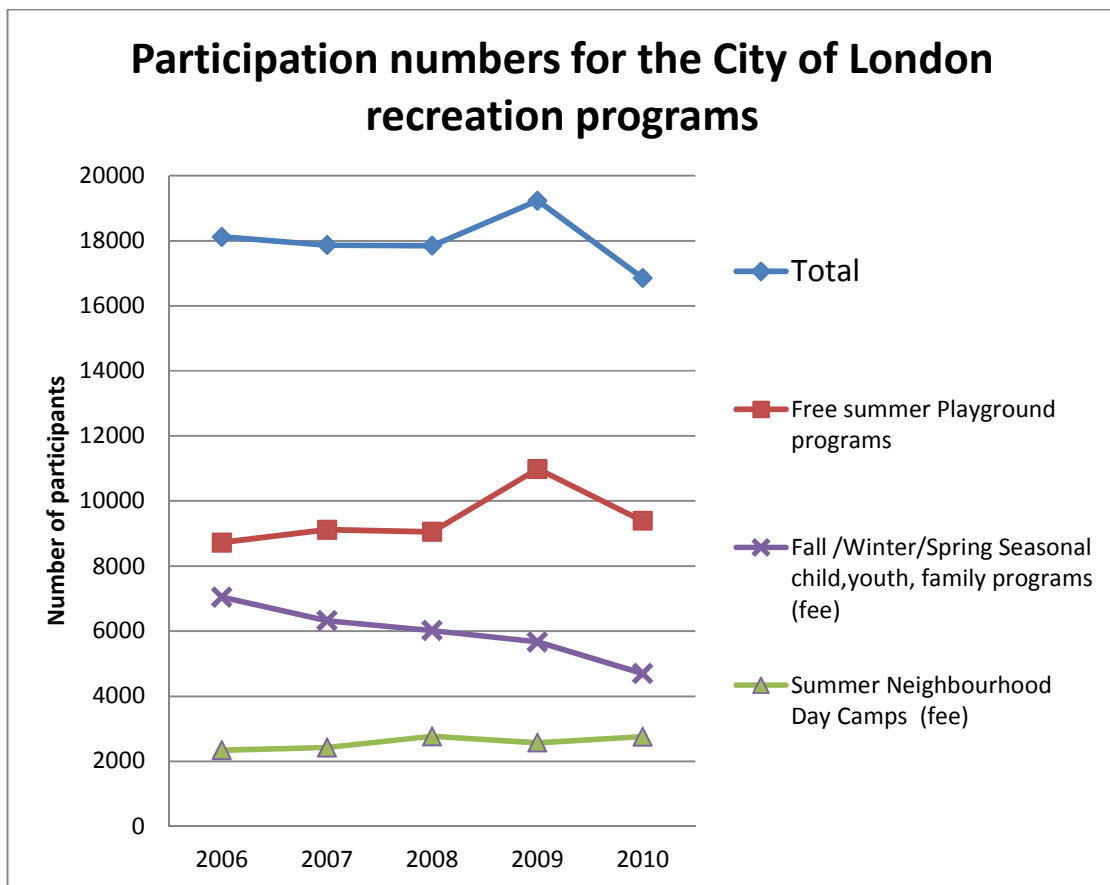
<b>10 Year Total Net Surplus (All Golf Courses London) (\$000s)</b>					
<b>Years</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>Total Net Before Contributions</b>	<b>Total Reserve Fund Contributions</b>	<b>Net Surplus/ (Deficit) after Contributions</b>
1999	1973	2625	652	300	352
2000	2018	2707	690	350	340
2001	1897	2316	419	540	(121)
2002	2331	2689	358	307	51
2003	2387	2801	414	172	242
2004	2487	2865	378	325	53
2005	2443	2924	481	341	140
2006	2638	3043	405	300	105
2007	2675	3031	355	300	55
2008 *	3248	3520	272	272	0
2009 *	3517	3589	72	316	(244)
2010 *	3413	3473	60	319	(259)

\* Reflects the cost of Provisions of Proshop, food and beverage services and the associated revenue



Appendix F: Participation numbers for the City of London recreation programs that range in fees from low end to high end (personal communication, Mike, March 11, 2011)

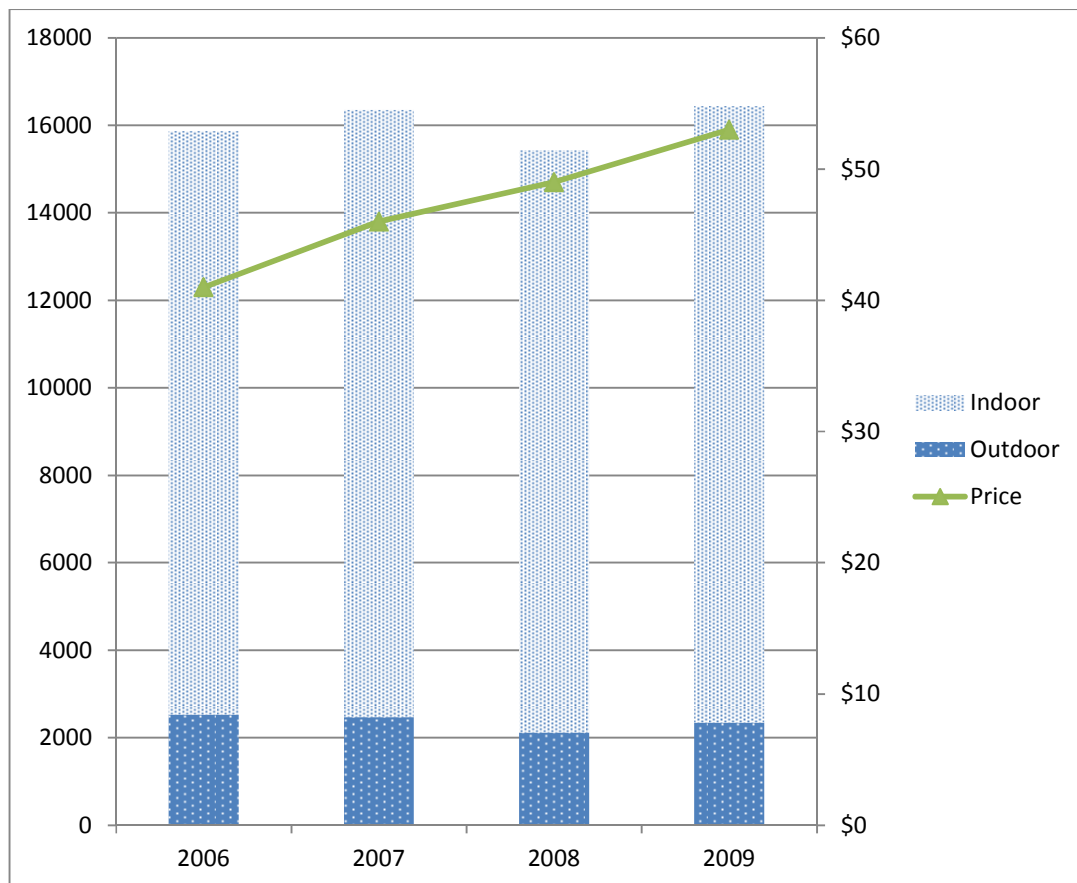
Year	Free summer Playground programs	Summer Neighbourhood Day Camps (fee)	Fall /Winter/Spring Seasonal child, youth, family programs (fee)	Yearly Total
2006	8724	2345	7050	<b>18119</b>
2007	9116	2425	6325	<b>17866</b>
2008	9055	2771	6019	<b>17845</b>
2009	10984	2573	5671	<b>19228</b>
2010	9393	2760	4698	<b>16851</b>





Appendix G: Swimming participation numbers for the City of London aquatic programs (personal communications, Cathy, November 18, 2010)

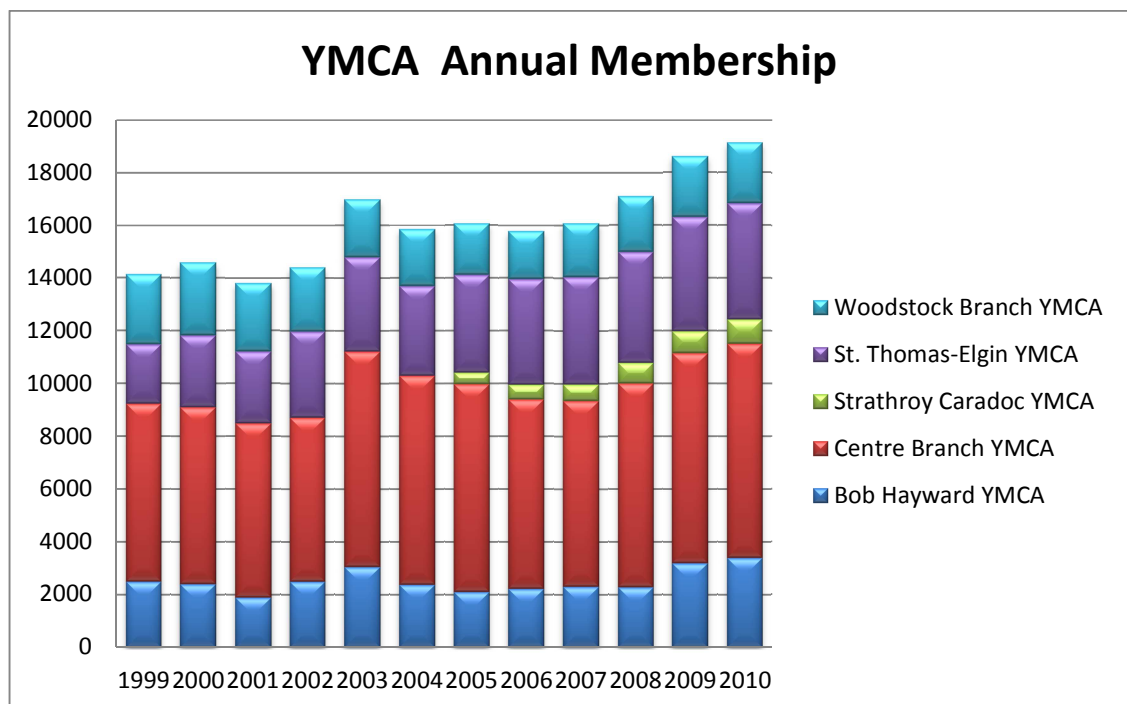
	Outdoor	Indoor	Total	Price
2006	2534	13,338	<b>15,922</b>	\$41
2007	2481	13,879	<b>16,360</b>	\$46
2008	2124	13,310	<b>15,434</b>	\$49
2009	2348	14,099	<b>16,447</b>	\$53



Appendix H: YMCA membership numbers for the five facilities in London area (personal communication, Mark, December 7, 2010)

Years	Bob Hayward YMCA	Centre Branch YMCA	Strathroy Caradoc YMCA	St. Thomas-Elgin YMCA	Woodstock Branch YMCA	Total
1999	2500	6734		2244	2650	14128
2000	2400	6696		2725	2761	14582
2001	1900	6587		2715	2580	13782
2002	2500	6211		3263	2430	14404
2003	3053	8163		3571	2196	16983
2004	2384	7908		3402	2150	15844
2005	2107	7870	434	3702	1950	16063
2006	2223	7169	563	4000	1805	15760
2007	2315	7039	621	4075	2033	16083
2008	2283	7714	779	4205	2100	17081
2009	3193	7960	826	4323	2294	18596
2010	3401	8100	923	4400	2300	19124

\*In 2011 the annual price for Child memberships are \$396.50, Student memberships are \$416.00 and Youth memberships are \$396.50. Every year there is a 2% increase on membership pricing.



## Appendix I: Letter of consent



### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

#### **Title of Study: The Impact of the Recession on Youth Sport Programs in a Local Community**

This research study will be conducted by Miss Courtney Peddle from the Department of Kinesiology at the University of Windsor. This study is being conducted for a thesis project at the master level, under supervision of Dr. Marijke Taks.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact Courtney Peddle via telephone (XXX-XXX-XXXX), which can be used during non-working hours or email ([xxxxx@uwindsor.ca](mailto:xxxxx@uwindsor.ca)) or contact Dr. Taks (Telephone: (XXX) XXX-XXXX ext. XXXX; email [xxxxx@uwindsor.ca](mailto:xxxxx@uwindsor.ca)).

#### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine the potential impact of the recent recession on youth sport programs in the City of London. Potential initiatives and strategies to deal with the affect of the recession on sport programs will also be investigated.

#### PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a 30 to 60 minute face-to-face interview at a time and location of your convenience.

#### POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts involved in this procedure.

#### POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Through this interview, you will have the opportunity to reflect and learn about how the recent recession might have impacted your youth sport programs. This knowledge can be used should future economic downturns occur. Keeping physically active even during times of economic hardship can be beneficial to the overall well being of citizens in your local community.

#### COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

There will be no payment for participation in this study. However participants will receive a token of appreciation for their participation (a mug of the University of Windsor).

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential. Your employment position will be identified in the results, which may make you identifiable. All interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed. Only the researcher and advisor will have access to this information. The audio files will be destroyed once transcription is completed. The transcribed interviews will be copied on a secure external drive and stored together with the letters of consent and other related documents for five years after completion of the study in a locked room in the departmental building. After this duration of time they will be destroyed.

## PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. A verbal indication suffices to be removed from the study. Any participants who wish to withdraw from the study will have his/her data removed and destroyed immediately. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

## FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE SUBJECTS

A summary of the research findings will be emailed to you after completion of the study.

Contact Email: [xxxxx@uwindsor.ca](mailto:xxxxx@uwindsor.ca)

Date when results are available: August 2011

## SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

This data may be used in subsequent studies.

## RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation and still receive the mug. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: XXX-XXX-XXXX, ext. XXX; e-mail: [xxxxx@uwindsor.ca](mailto:xxxxx@uwindsor.ca)

## SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study **The Impact of the Recession on Youth Sport Programs in a Local Community** as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## VITA AUCTORIS

NAME	Courtney Peddle
PLACE OF BIRTH	Guelph, Ontario
YEAR OF BIRTH	1985
EDUCATION	Centennial C.V.I 1999-2003 University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario 2004-2009 B.Soc.Sc University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario 2009-2011 M.HK